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Note: Unless otherwise listed, all phone numbers are in area code 843.

1) TRAVEL/TOURISM

Tourism is South Carolina's major industry: South Carolina's No. 1 industry is tourism, generating \$16 billion in revenue annually according to the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism. In recent years, as traditional industries like tobacco and textiles have declined, tourism has recaptured much of those economic losses and grown considerably since 1990. Today, nearly 11 percent of the state's workforce is employed in tourist- or travel-related sectors.

The largest tourism market in South Carolina is Myrtle Beach and its surrounding communities, which account for roughly one-third of all tourism in the state. Other key tourism markets include Charleston and Hilton Head. The state and local municipalities invest millions of dollars in tourism promotion and tourism infrastructure each year. In 2007 and again in 2008, the state increased its investment in tourism to grow its No. 1 industry.

Myrtle Beach is the second most popular vacation destination in the eastern U.S. This destination attracts a broad cross-section of American travelers, most of whom drive to the area. Officials estimate nearly 14 million people visit the Myrtle Beach area each year. The local tourism industry is directly impacted by economic factors such as fuel prices, cost of living (as it impacts discretionary income), mortgage lending rates and credit card debt.

Contacts:

- Brad Dean, president and CEO, Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, 916-7241
- Chad Prosser, director, South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, (803) 734-0166
- Marion Edmonds, director of communications, South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, (803) 734-1370

Canadian tourism: Among South Carolina's 783,600 annual Canadian visitors, the majority originate from Ontario (70 percent) and Quebec (23 percent). More snow birds (winter visitors who travel to warmer climates for extended stays) are expected to flock to the Grand Strand in 2008 because of the strong value of the Canadian dollar versus the U.S. dollar. Due to this economic incentive, more Canadians are expected to buy real estate in the area as well. The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce has tripled its investment in tourism promotion in Canada in 2008, hoping to lure more Canadian visitors to the area. The chamber also sponsors the annual Canadian-American Days, a nine-day celebration (March 8-16, 2008), which draws over 200,000 Canadian visitors each year. In 2007, this event was jointly hosted by the U.S. Ambassador to Canada, and his counterpart, the Canadian Ambassador to the United States.

Local contacts:

- Brad Dean, president and CEO, Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, 916-7241
- Danna Lilly, director of sales (groups), Myrtle Beach Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, 916-7261

Shortage of H2B visa workers: The hospitality and tourism industries rely heavily on seasonal workers through the H2B and J1 visa programs. Many businesses in the hospitality industry, including local hotels, see sharp increases in their level of business during the summer, creating many seasonal jobs. The annual cap on student visa programs such as H2B and J1 do not permit the necessary numbers of seasonal workers to be hired, creating a worker shortage. Most of these positions go unfilled.

Improvements to these visa programs were debated in Congress in 2007 as part of the effort to pass comprehensive immigration reform. That measure was soundly defeated in the U.S. Senate.

Recently, legislation was proposed as part of the Omnibus Budget Legislation to exempt returning workers from the mandated caps. That measure failed, too.

Without sufficient supply of H2B visa workers, jobs will go unfilled in summer 2008. Tourism advocates support expanding the cap and visa provisions, as well as streamlining the process, to help resolve the issues and ease the seasonal worker shortage that the Myrtle Beach area continually faces.

Local contacts:

- Brad Dean, president and CEO, Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, 916-7241
- Pauline Levesque, CEO, Myrtle Beach Area Hospitality Association, 916-7269
- Frans Mustert, CEO, Oceana Resorts, 222-5341
- Peter MacIntyre, general manager, Ripley's Attractions Myrtle Beach (J1 student visa program), 916-0888 x239
- Nicole Aiello, public information officer, city of North Myrtle Beach (concession and lifeguard programs), 280-5612
- Nancy Harth, international exchange coordinator, Burroughs & Chapin Company, Inc., 918-7801

2) TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Reauthorization Bill: The next president will be asked to sign a new transportation reauthorization bill, tentatively scheduled for FY 2009-2010. Though the nation's infrastructure needs have grown considerably, the current level of investment is not sufficient to maintain our existing transportation infrastructure. Further, the Federal Highway Trust Fund is nearly depleted. Because of these challenges, funding for transportation infrastructure will be an important congressional priority in the near future.

For the Myrtle Beach area, its greatest infrastructure need is additional road capacity. The area is one of the fastest-growing regions in the nation and the nation's largest and busiest vacation destination *without* interstate access. The area has begun to address this need through Corridor #5, as designated by the Federal Highway Administration. This corridor includes Interstate 73, which will someday connect six states (Mich., Ohio, W. Va., Va., N.C. and S.C.). This interstate is also key to providing additional evacuation routes during hurricanes, a common threat in the Carolinas. For the Myrtle Beach area, interstate access will boost tourism, attract new industry and save lives (in the event of a major hurricane). Because many road infrastructure programs base funding upon permanent year-round residents, a region dominated by a tourism economy is at a disadvantage when competing for funding with major metropolitan areas. Currently, this project has been funded through state and federal earmarks, but to have the project completed in the next 10-15 years will require additional funding in the next transportation reauthorization bill. That legislation will occur during the next president's term.

Local contacts:

- Brad Dean, executive director, National Interstate 73/74 Corridor Association, and president and CEO, Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, 916-7241
- Rep. Alan Clemmons (R-Myrtle Beach), chairman, National I-73/I-74 Association, and member, South Carolina General Assembly, 995-1421
- Rep. Tracy Edge (R-North Myrtle Beach), co-chair, South Carolina I-73 Association, and member, South Carolina General Assembly, 424-9308

Funding roadway improvements through local taxes: On Nov. 7, 2006, Horry County (county encompassing Myrtle Beach) voters, by a 61.4 percent to 38.6 percent margin, supported a one-cent capital projects sales tax for roads. This tax went into effect on May 1, 2007, and increased the level of sales tax in Horry County an additional penny on all retail sales, accommodations and prepared food and beverages. Horry County is slated to receive

\$425,539,087 over the seven-year life of the one-cent capital projects sales tax. If the revenue designated on the referendum is collected before the end of the seven years, or if all the listed projects have been completed before then, the tax will end sooner. This is the second such tax increase approved by local voters. The first was passed in the late 1990s and added 1.5 percent to local sales tax collections and is still in effect today. That initial tax collection funded more than \$1 billion for road improvements, including local roads that will someday connect with Interstate 73. The passing of two local sales tax referendums in the past 10 years demonstrates the importance of infrastructure improvements to local residents.

Local contacts:

- Lisa Bourcier, public information director, Horry County Government, 915-5390
- Rep. Alan Clemmons (R-Myrtle Beach), chairman, National I-73/I-74 Association, and member, South Carolina General Assembly, 995-1421
- Rep. Tracy Edge (R-North Myrtle Beach), co-chair, South Carolina I-73 Association, and member, South Carolina General Assembly, 424-9308

3) MILITARY

Former Myrtle Beach Air Force Base: This former U.S. Air Force facility was established in 1940 as a World War II training base and was also used for coastal patrols during the war. After World War II, it closed and then reopened in 1954, serving as a front-line air force base in the Cold War, Vietnam War and Persian Gulf War of 1990. The base was permanently closed in 1993, and many Air Force veterans retired in the area. Currently, the site is being redeveloped for civilian uses, including recreational facilities. In 2008, this area will welcome the opening of The Market Common, a major development project overseen by McCaffery Interests, including residential housing, retail and restaurants. Though the closure of the base was once seen as a major economic setback, in 2008 it will serve as a major economic boost, with more than 4,000 housing units created and several hundred jobs added to the local economy.

Local contacts:

- Col. Thomas (Buddy) Styers (Ret.), senior project manager for development, The Market Common (McCaffery Interests), and executive director, Myrtle Beach Air Force Base Redevelopment Authority, 839-3500 x100
- Gen. Robert Reed (USAF, Ret.), chairman, Air Force Base Historic Signage Committee, 449-6559
- Mark Kruea, public information officer, city of Myrtle Beach, 918-1014

Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq: The ongoing military conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have impacted thousands of families throughout our nation. Many face economic, and other, challenges with family members serving in the armed forces. The Myrtle Beach area is no exception.

Local contacts:

- Drake Tilley, Sr., 446-6241 (retired naval officer whose son, a naval doctor, served as a flight surgeon on the USS Enterprise in Iraq, 2005)
- Phillip Lewis, 995-3052 (retired Air Force member whose son is deployed with the Army National Guard in Afghanistan)
- Lt. Kevin Heins, investigations, Myrtle Beach Police Department, 450-1133 (active member, Army Reserves, stationed in Ft. Bliss, Texas, 2004-2005 to mobilize troops to Iraq and Afghanistan)

Charity effort sends local WWII veterans to Washington, D.C., to visit memorial: Jack Platt, a local U.S. Navy veteran, had a dream: to provide a trip, free of charge, for local armed forces veterans to visit the World War II memorial in D.C. Platt, with radio personality Lou Krieger of Sunny 106.5, raised \$68,000 with support from St. James High School (\$20,000), the media, community civic groups and the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce. In November, 125

Grand Strand World War II veterans took a chartered flight on Myrtle Beach Direct Air and visited the new World War II memorial. During lunch at the memorial, the veterans received greetings from representatives of the offices of Congressman Henry Brown and Sen. Lindsey Graham. With the trip costing around \$45,000, the remaining donations are being spent on needs for Disabled American Veterans and South Carolina veteran homes.

Local contacts:

- Jack Platt (retired, served in the Navy 1944-1946, brother was a radioman gunner aboard bomber near USS Arizona when Pearl Harbor was bombed), 215-0346
- Lou Krieger, radio personality, Sunny 106.5, 222-3478

4) HEALTH CARE

Aging population and lack of primary care providers: The aging of America is one of the causes of a decline in the number of physicians available to see new patients. As our general population approaches retirement, so does the pool of available physicians and nurses. The aging of America is also increasing the demand for physicians and specialists—especially those in the treatment of older adults (gerontologists, orthopaedic surgeons, gastroenterologists). South Carolina faces a shortage of many other health care providers—pharmacists, physical therapists, radiology and ultrasound technologists, to name a few. By 2010, nearly one in three nursing positions will be vacant according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Also, as Americans grow older, the population of Medicare patients seeking physicians increases, which leads us to another challenge currently faced in health care today. This challenge is particularly difficult in the Myrtle Beach area, widely recognized as a popular retirement community.

Declining Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements: Due to the decline in federal reimbursements, patients are finding it increasingly difficult to find a physician willing to accept new Medicare or Medicaid patients. With the majority of the population migrating to our area being retirement age, finding a physician to accept new patients is a challenge faced by new area residents. Reimbursements are declining, and overhead expenses such as malpractice are rising dramatically. The struggles of operating a medical practice are becoming so overwhelming for physicians that a trend is developing of physicians seeking other employment opportunities. Much of the shortfall in federal reimbursements falls back on hospitals and medical practices, driving up the cost of health care in South Carolina. This is a main reason why small businesses in the Myrtle Beach area have found it difficult to maintain adequate health care coverage for their employees.

Covering the uninsured: Nearly 700,000 South Carolinians, including 100,000 children, have no health insurance and pay little or nothing for their hospital care. Another 30 percent are enrolled in government programs (such as Medicare and Medicaid) that pay hospitals and other safety net providers less than the cost of their care. In response, hospitals are forced to shift unpaid costs to private payers. As their reimbursement shrinks, hospitals are struggling to cover the cost of providing care and to generate revenue needed to replace or improve old buildings and technologies.

Local contacts:

- Doug White, CEO, Grand Strand Regional Medical Center, 692-1100
- Phil Clayton, CEO, Conway Medical Center, 347-8114/7111
- Tim Brown, CEO, Loris Healthcare System, 716-7194
- Rep. Tracy Edge (R-North Myrtle Beach), member, South Carolina General Assembly, and chairman, South Carolina House Committee on Department of Health and Human Services, 424-9308

Horry County prescription discount card program for all residents: Starting Jan. 1, 2008, Horry County introduced a discount card program to help consumers cope with the high cost of prescription drugs. The county is making free prescription drug discount cards available under a

program sponsored by the National Association of Counties (NACo) that offers average savings of 20 percent off the retail price of commonly prescribed drugs as well as pet prescriptions. The cards may be used by all county residents, regardless of age, income or existing health coverage, and are accepted at the majority of the county's pharmacies. A national network of more than 59,000 participating retail pharmacies also will honor the NACo prescription discount card.

Local contact:

- Lisa Bourcier, public information director, Horry County Government, 915-5390

Nationally recognized Heart Center (Grand Strand Regional Medical Center): Established in 1995, the Heart Center at Grand Strand Regional Medical Center is the only open-heart cardiac surgery program in Horry and Georgetown counties. In 2001, Solucient—an information products company based in Evanston, Illinois—named Grand Strand Regional among the nation's top 100 hospitals for cardiac surgery. In 2004, another independent health care-quality company recognized it as South Carolina's leading hospital for overall cardiac services and among the top 10 percent of all U.S. hospitals for heart surgery. The center's survival rate for cardiovascular surgeries, at more than 99 percent, exceeds the national survival rate of about 98 percent. The center's average length of stay for cardiac surgery is 7.5 days, with the national expected average length of stay 9.69 days.

Local contact:

- Doug White, CEO, Grand Strand Regional Medical Center, 692-1100
- Joan Carroza, marketing director, Grand Strand Regional Medical Center, 692-1053

Holistic approach to cancer treatment, partnership with Duke University (Coastal Cancer Center): Coastal Cancer Center is a community cancer center serving the Grand Strand area for 25 years, offering state-of-the-art cancer care in a community setting, close to home, family and friends. The doctors and clinical staff use a team approach, which includes a plan of care with patient orientation, diagnostic testing including x-ray and CT scans, laboratory services, a dispensing center offered for the convenience of patients, and chemotherapy administration in relaxed, community-based environments of care, compassion and hope. Coastal Cancer Center is collaborating with the research and educational programs of Duke University Health System.

Local contact:

- Deanna Cochran, chief financial officer, Coastal Cancer Center, 692-5018

5) EDUCATION

Lack of resources to address No Child Left Behind mandates: No Child Left Behind requires that all children—regardless of ability, disability poverty, ability to speak English, etc.—be able to achieve the same level of performance. However, no federal funds or allocations are provided for students who need special resources to achieve performance goals. This creates special challenges for school districts that are experiencing high growth rates in the number of students.

Lack of state-to-state equity in testing: While No Child Left Behind calls for each state to have a statewide test, each state determines what "proficient" means. A student could be deemed "proficient" in Texas but "below basic" in South Carolina. To address the need to increase its educational standing, South Carolina has implemented a rigorous standard, challenging its students to outperform students in other states.

Horry County high schools among nation's best: U.S. News & World Report has ranked Myrtle Beach High School and Loris High School among the nation's best, each listed in the bronze category for achievement on standardized reading and math tests; participation and performance in Advanced Placement courses. Approximately one-sixth of the 1,280 students at Myrtle Beach High School have special needs, and about the same number are English-as-a-

second-language students, the largest number in the county. In part, the school's success can be credited to its Total Inclusion Program for special needs students, which ensures that all students are eligible for diplomas.

Local contacts:

- Teal Britton, public information officer, Horry County Public Schools, 488-6777 (administrative matters)
- Will Garland, chairman of the board, Horry County Public Schools, 358-8002 (other matters)

Early College High School—a cure for “senioritis”: In the late 1990s, U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley commissioned a study to investigate the lack of productivity of America's youth during their high school years. The work of this group became known as “the senioritis study” and laid much of the groundwork for numerous new approaches to high school education. One of the movements that resulted has become known as the Early College High School movement, a positive small school movement that aims to improve high school education and to facilitate the transition from high school to college, especially for the “neglected majority.” In 2006, in what has become known as an unprecedented private sector/public school partnership, Burroughs & Chapin Company, Inc., Horry-Georgetown Technical College and Horry County Public Schools opened the Horry County Early College High School. The school is housed at Horry-Georgetown Technical College, will never educate more than 400 students at one time, and provides the new three R's—Rigor, Relevancy and Reality—as well as the opportunity for students to obtain a two-year AA, AS or technical degree the same night as they obtain their high school diploma. Knowing that education is indeed the economic engine of any state and a nation, Business Education Expectations (BE2) has been created as the business support arm for the Early College High School, providing mentors, internships and scholarships to four-year educational partners inclusive of the University of South Carolina, Clemson University, Francis Marion University, Coastal Carolina University, Lander and South Carolina State University.

Local contact:

- Marsha Griffin, business education expectations (BE2) consultant, Marsha Griffin & Associates, 449-9675

Leadership Grand Strand (Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce): Through Leadership Grand Strand, a corps of informed, committed and qualified individuals assembles to develop dynamic leadership skills. The nine-month program selects 30 participants each year, who meet a full day each month. Leadership Grand Strand, which traditionally begins with a retreat in September and culminates with graduation in May, explores topics such as historical aspects of the Grand Strand, tourism and economic development, education and law enforcement, human services, government and politics and the arts. The curriculum includes community assignments that are related to each month's topic, challenging participants to explore current issues first-hand with local leaders. Alumni serve on community boards and commissions and in key decision-making positions throughout the Grand Strand.

Local contacts:

- Diana Greene, vice president of membership programs and services, Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, 916-7222
- Blakely Jenkins, education and events manager, Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, 916-7232

Youth Leadership Academy (Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce): On Jan. 15, 2008, the chamber's Leadership Grand Strand Class XXVIII is presenting the first Youth Leadership Academy, endorsed by Congressman James Clyburn and Coastal Carolina University. Hundreds of students from six counties along the Grand Strand and Pee Dee are expected to participate. The academy has been developed for 10th graders who show leadership skills in their respective schools and communities. This one-day program is designed for the selected students

to recognize their leadership talents and apply them in becoming effective, ethical leaders in their home, school, workplace and community. The day begins with a welcome video from Congressman Clyburn followed by an opening presentation by David Bennett, Coastal Carolina University's football coach. Over the course of the day, the students are divided into small groups to discuss several predetermined topics. The sessions focus on developing the four core fundamentals of leadership—integrity, vision, inspiration and communication—with each student having the opportunity to express his/her own ideas.

Local contacts:

- Blakely Jenkins, education and events manager, Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, 916-7232
- Diana Greene, vice president of membership programs and services, Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, 916-7222

Rapid growth, post-secondary education (Coastal Carolina University): Rapid growth at this local university, which ranks at the bottom for funding among South Carolina's 13 senior public universities, has necessitated that the board of trustees partner with other colleges for academic program expansion and pursue public-private partnerships for an arena, student life center and possibly a new library. Founded in 1954 through night classes at Conway High School, the university educates more than 8,300 students on 302 acres, excluding the 1,062-acre Waties Island facility.

Local contact:

- Dr. Dave DeCenzo, president, Coastal Carolina University, 349-2001

Technical college links learning and earning (Horry-Georgetown Technical College): As a two-year technical/community college, Horry-Georgetown Technical College is focused on linking higher education with the world of work, specifically preparing students to fill existing and emerging jobs and meeting the workforce needs of employers. So aligned are the nation's community colleges with the workforce that all of the top 10 job growth areas identified by the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics are in career areas obtainable with credentials from a technical/community college or via transfer from a two-year college to a senior institution. Locally, the college realizes tremendous success in connecting employers and employees, annually placing more than 95 percent of graduates into their chosen career field or four-year degree transfer programs.

Local contacts:

- Neyle Wilson, president, Horry-Georgetown Technical College, 349-5201
- Greg Thompson, director of college relations, Horry-Georgetown Technical College, 349-5247

6) ECONOMY

Impact of the housing market on the local economy: Although Myrtle Beach is one of the fastest growing areas of the nation, home sales are down due to several factors, including the current mortgage situation and high insurance rates near the coast. Sales of homes in all price ranges are down but have not fallen as rapidly as sales in other resort destinations. Locally, falling home prices could impact the economy by as much as \$243 million, according to a new forecast for the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Myrtle Beach is expected to grow 1.7 percentage points less than it would have in a more robust mortgage market. However, slowed economic growth is to be expected after a period marked by large jumps in real estate sales. The Grand Strand's real estate economy grew at a record pace in 2005 and 2006. Compared to 2004, the number of new Horry County residential building permits increased 89 percent in 2005, representing a value of \$1.62 billion, according to the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce's Statistical Abstract (18th edition).

Local contacts:

- Dr. Donald Schunk, research economist and lecturer, Coastal Carolina University, 655-0995
- Tom Maeser, president, Fortune Academy of Real Estate, and market analyst, Coastal Carolinas Association of Realtors, 283-3532

Impact of banking on the local economy: Banking in the Grand Strand continues to be a viable, profitable enterprise, as evidenced by an increase in the number of financial institutions that have begun operating here recently or have operations planned in the near future. That said, existing economic uncertainty is causing most local bankers to maintain an attitude of cautious optimism for the short run. As the Grand Strand population continues to grow, and local marketing and economic development initiatives continue to bring visitors and permanent residents to our market, the amount of personal wealth, as well as the demand for credit and capital to support the growth, will provide additional opportunities for our local financial institutions, especially in commercial and industrial activities. Continued short- and long-term interest rate decreases will encourage additional purchasing and investment as well if those trends continue. However, access to capital in the residential real estate market for development needs will likely be more difficult to obtain or will be more heavily structured until residents who desire to relocate on a full- or part-time basis are able to make local home purchases and cause our single- and multi-family housing inventories to decrease.

Local contacts:

- Jimmy Kimbell, senior vice president, Tideland Bank, 429-2003
- Walt Standish, president and CEO, Beach First National Bank, 916-7813
- Dr. Donald Schunk, research economist and lecturer, Coastal Carolina University, 655-0995

7) ENERGY/ENVIRONMENT

Beach renourishment: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently began beach renourishment along the Grand Strand, where 3 million cubic yards of sand will be placed: Myrtle Beach (1.5 million cubic yards over 9 miles), North Myrtle Beach (750,000 cubic yards over 8.6 miles), and Garden City Beach/Surfside Beach (750,000 cubic yards over 7.7 miles). This current phase, which began in November 2007 and is expected to continue until January 2009, represents the largest investment in beach renourishment in South Carolina. The last phase was conducted between 1996 and 1998. Area beaches are renourished approximately every eight to 10 years and are funded through federal appropriations. The overall cost of the project will exceed \$29 million.

Local contacts:

- Patrick O'Donnell, project manager, Charleston District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 743-9222
- Ron Andrews, assistant city manager, city of Myrtle Beach, 918-2011
- Kevin Blayton, director of public works, city of North Myrtle Beach, 280-5538

Wind energy (Coastal Carolina University): Students and engineers from Coastal Carolina University, Clemson University, Santee Cooper and the Savannah River National Laboratory have constructed a wind monitoring station on Waties Island, a pristine barrier island off the coast of Horry County. Data will be collected for one year to determine the feasibility of using wind power to generate commercially viable electricity on and off the coast of South Carolina. If successful, a commercial-scale wind turbine would be installed. The 1,062-acre portion of Waties Island belonging to Coastal Carolina University already provides a natural laboratory for extensive study in marine science and wetlands biology.

Local contact:

- Dr. Paul Gayes, Palmetto professor/director, marine and wetland studies, Coastal Carolina University, 995-1442

Green Power (Santee Cooper): Santee Cooper was the first utility in South Carolina to offer Green Power, electricity generated by renewable resources like solar and decomposing garbage in selected landfills. Now in its seventh year, Santee Cooper significantly expanded the program in 2007 by adding Green Power Solar Schools (an educational-based solar project in elementary and middle schools), starting three wind research studies, signing a contract for a fourth landfill generating site, and launching Santee Cooper Green, our ongoing commitment to environmental leadership.

Local contact:

- Laura Varn, vice president of corporate communications and media relations, Santee Cooper, 761-4133

Live-work-play development (The Market Common): Developer McCaffery Interests is nearing completion on The Market Common, the Grand Strand's first urban village designed to encourage walking and biking. Located on the former Myrtle Beach Air Force Base in Myrtle Beach, this mixed-use residential and retail development will boast six restaurants, approximately 40 retail stores, a 14-screen movie theater, and an upscale grocery store. Apartments and condos are being built above retail stores, designed to offer a Main Street USA feeling. The first phase will open in April 2008.

Local contact:

- Col. Thomas (Buddy) Styers (Ret.), senior project manager for development, The Market Common (McCaffery Interests), and executive director, Myrtle Beach Air Force Base Redevelopment Authority, 839-3500 x100

Designing for energy efficiency (Withers Preserve): Withers Preserve Development Company is building low-country style homes and condominiums designed for enhanced energy efficiency. Situated near The Market Common, the development, which consists of 4,000 homes priced from \$200,000 to \$1 million, is the first GE Ecomagination community in the United States. Contractors participating in the home builder program have attended seminars on state-of-the-art building techniques that apply to the building envelope and HVAC system installation and performance. The program teaches builders how to construct homes that include tight construction, fresh air ventilation, improved thermal systems (insulation), properly sized HVAC equipment, humidity control, pressure balancing and combustion safety. These building techniques deliver both comfort and energy efficiency in addition to improved durability and health and safety. The homes also feature GE Profile™ ENERGY STAR® appliances. The goal is to save the homeowner \$600 to \$1,500 on annual utility costs versus an average code-built home.

Local contact:

- Rick Ryan, president, Withers Preserve Development Company, 232-8696 x304

8) IMMIGRATION REFORM

Federal/state immigration reform: Locally, businesses seek comprehensive immigration reform administered at the federal level, balanced with appropriate legislation at the state level that (1) preempts local governments from passing piece-meal ordinances that attempt to regulate immigration at the local level, (2) removes unfair burden of unenforceable compliance on businesses within our state, (3) provides adequate protection for businesses that follow the law but unknowingly hire illegal workers, and (4) holds employers accountable for compliance of immigration standards.

As the federal government has failed to pass comprehensive immigration reform, this challenge has been left up to local and state governments. The South Carolina General Assembly is poised to debate immigration legislation in its 2008 session, as early as January 2008.

Local contacts:

- Brad Dean, president and CEO, Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, 916-7241
- Miriam Berrouet, director, Hispanic Business Center, Horry-Georgetown Technical Center, 222-0084
- Rep. Alan Clemmons (R-Myrtle Beach), local member, South Carolina General Assembly, 995-1421
- Sen. Luke Rankin (R-Myrtle Beach), local member, South Carolina General Assembly, 602-4654

Detection/deportation of illegal immigrants at J. Reuben Long Detention Center: The Horry County Sheriff's Office will apply for a federal program in 2008 that will make it easier for deputies at the county jail to deport illegal immigrants. The program, called 287(g) after the section of the federal law that created it, would train deputies at J. Reuben Long Detention Center to check the immigration status of inmates. If a database search determines that an inmate is an illegal immigrant, federal agents would take the inmate from jail and begin deportation proceedings. Currently, deputies are unable to check the immigration status of inmates and must contact federal authorities, who run the check. Federal agents can then decide whether they will pick up the offender.

Local contact:

- Sheriff Phillip Thompson, J. Reuben Long Detention Center, Horry County, 915-5450

9) SOCIAL SECURITY

Funding of Social Security with an aging population: This year, 78 million baby boomers will turn 62, a 50 percent increase in the number of people who receive Social Security benefits, according to news reports. Almost one-fourth of South Carolina's residents are over 55 years of age, according to the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce's Statistical Abstract (18th edition). Horry County is the top region in the state where retirees are relocating. In a 10-year period, the county's population of 65 and over grew by 50 percent.

Contacts:

- Nathan Holmes, regional communications director, Social Security Administration, (404) 562-5500
- Ray Fontaine, executive director, Horry County Council on Aging (programs and services for the aging), 248-5523
- Rocco (Rocky) Cartisano, associate director, Aging and Active Retirement Center, Coastal Carolina University, 349-4116

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