Administration building reopens

A thorough renovation of the Sumter County Administration building has been completed and the building is once again open to the public.

The Penny for Progress project got the final go-ahead in March 2018 after the Historic Preservation Design Review Committee approved plans to tear down an adjacent office and expand the County’s East Canal Street footprint.

Housed within the three-story building are the offices of Assessor, Auditor and Treasurer on the first floor with the Finance and Purchasing departments on the second floor. The third floor is the office of Administration, County Council Chambers, Clerk to Council, Human Resources and the County Attorney.

“This was a long-awaited and much needed renovation that employs new security measures, a new elevator and entranceway, a reconfigured and updated Council Chambers,” said Sumter County Administrator Gary Mixon. “We also wanted to take architectural and aesthetic cues from the Judicial Center across the street as the city and county work together to revitalize downtown Sumter.”

Mixon said the redesigns to the first-floor offices were done to make customer service functions easier and safer.

“We are here to serve the citizens of Sumter County and our first-floor offices are very busy,” he said. “We hope foot traffic will flow better with these improvements.”

Prior to the makeover, the first-floor offices relocated to Magnolia Place while the second and third floors took up office space at the Sumter County Courthouse. Then in March, all offices of Sumter County Government closed to the public to stop the spread of coronavirus.

“Our employees have shown resilience through relocation and shutdown and we’re proud of them, because this hasn’t been easy,” Mixon said. “We’ve stayed plenty busy and have had to figure out how to safely interact with the general public.”

The offices of Sumter County Government are once again open to the public.

NUMBERS YOU MAY NEED:
Administration: 436-2102
Assessor: 436-2115
Auditor: 436-2136
Human Resources: 436-2306
Treasurer: 436-2213

Former Administrator DuBose looks back

Former Sumter County Administrator E.C. “Mac” DuBose turned 100-years-old last December and spoke recently with current Administrator Gary Mixon.

“I was glad with the job,” DuBose said. “I enjoyed my time. I really did.”

A native of Sumter, DuBose served as Administrator from 1973-87, having previously served as a County Commissioner, the governing body that preceded County Council.

He was a Clemson graduate and farmer prior to being Administrator, and recalls his tenure fondly.

(See DUBOSE, Page 3)
Shadoan keeps digital traffic flowing smoothly

When David Shadoan was taking a networking class at Central Carolina Technical College, something resonated.

“l hadn’t really done any work in that area before and everything just clicked,” he said.

Ten years later, Shadoan, 34, is a Network Engineer for Sumter County Government, staying busy with the current task of moving equipment back into the newly renovated Administration building.

“What I like most about this job is, there’s always something new, even with day to day tasks and reviewing logs, it might seem mundane but there’s always new things to look for and constantly research,” he said. “The tech field is constantly changing. That’s one thing I like about it.”

To explain what he does, Shadoan used the analogy of a city.

“Your computer is your house and servers are the places where you might do business throughout the day,” he said. “When you look at a network, it consists of various roads that connect everything.”

During his junior and senior years at Sumter High School, Information Technology wasn’t really on his radar, but some programming and development classes changed his perspective.

“I thought – hey, I like this. It’s fun and I can see myself doing something like this,” he said.

Video games and time on computers gave him an appreciation and understanding of the basics, and he decided his future would be found in the digital world.

First, he took classes at USC-Sumter and then Central Carolina, from which he earned an Associate’s Degree in Computer Technology and several Certificates in his field.

His first technology job was with Computer Upgraders before he left to provide technical support for Sykes Enterprises. In 2011, he came on board with Sumter County Government as a Computer Tech II.

Shadoan is currently tasked with helping move a variety of equipment back into the recently renovated Administration building.

“There’s nothing too fancy about what we’re doing right now. We’re simply moving equipment from one building to another,” he said. “The weeks leading up the move were more interesting from a technology perspective — they involved learning the intricacies of and configuring a new access control system, planning for and configuring new network infrastructure hardware, and figuring out how to adapt to the frequent changes that come with both a construction and IT project of this scale.”

Sumter County Administrator Gary Mixon said Shadoan’s demeanor and problem-solving skills have been impressive.

“Shadoan is currently tasked with helping move a variety of equipment back into the recently renovated Administration building.

“There’s nothing too fancy about what we’re doing right now. We’re simply moving equipment from one building to another,” he said. “The weeks leading up the move were more interesting from a technology perspective — they involved learning the intricacies of and configuring a new access control system, planning for and configuring new network infrastructure hardware, and figuring out how to adapt to the frequent changes that come with both a construction and IT project of this scale.”

Sumter County Administrator Gary Mixon said Shadoan’s demeanor and problem-solving skills have been impressive.

“Shadoan is currently tasked with helping move a variety of equipment back into the recently renovated Administration building.

“There’s nothing too fancy about what we’re doing right now. We’re simply moving equipment from one building to another,” he said. “The weeks leading up the move were more interesting from a technology perspective — they involved learning the intricacies of and configuring a new access control system, planning for and configuring new network infrastructure hardware, and figuring out how to adapt to the frequent changes that come with both a construction and IT project of this scale.”

Sumter County Administrator Gary Mixon said Shadoan’s demeanor and problem-solving skills have been impressive.

“Shadoan is currently tasked with helping move a variety of equipment back into the recently renovated Administration building.

“There’s nothing too fancy about what we’re doing right now. We’re simply moving equipment from one building to another,” he said. “The weeks leading up the move were more interesting from a technology perspective — they involved learning the intricacies of and configuring a new access control system, planning for and configuring new network infrastructure hardware, and figuring out how to adapt to the frequent changes that come with both a construction and IT project of this scale.”

Sumter County Administrator Gary Mixon said Shadoan’s demeanor and problem-solving skills have been impressive.

“Shadoan is currently tasked with helping move a variety of equipment back into the recently renovated Administration building.

“There’s nothing too fancy about what we’re doing right now. We’re simply moving equipment from one building to another,” he said. “The weeks leading up the move were more interesting from a technology perspective — they involved learning the intricacies of and configuring a new access control system, planning for and configuring new network infrastructure hardware, and figuring out how to adapt to the frequent changes that come with both a construction and IT project of this scale.”

Sumter County Administrator Gary Mixon said Shadoan’s demeanor and problem-solving skills have been impressive.
SHADOAN, from Page 2

“Shadoan has done a fantastic job during a very difficult time and I’m very proud of her,” he said. “Being a father keeps him pretty busy away from work, but when there’s free time, he enjoys race cars. “Mario Kart,” he said, laughing. “I love me some Mario.”

DUBOSE, from Page 1

“I cannot pick out anything particular, I hope I did a good job,” he said. “I can’t remember any controversy -- it went right smoothly … everyone got along really well.”

Industrial expansions were on the rise during his time, but DuBose said it was “nothing like it is now. Everything has boomed.”

DuBose mentioned how he worked closely with Council Chairman O.D. Harvin, and Mixon told him the current Council Chairman is James T. McCain Jr., whose late father was a well-known Sumterite.

“I knew Nooker,” Dubose said, using the nickname for James T. McCain Sr. “A good man.”

Dillon Park and Crystal Lakes Golf Course came about during DuBose’s tenure and the former Administrator joked that he “didn’t think anyone on Council was interested in golf, but I was.”

Mixon recalled that most everyone called DuBose “Mr. Mac.”

“You left a lasting impression,” Mixon said. “A gentleman’s gentleman.”

“I hope it was good,” DuBose replied.
County launches EMT Trainee program

A new program aims to give Emergency Medical Technicians on the job training while creating a homegrown talent pool of emergency responders.

Sumter County is now accepting applications for its EMT Trainee program, a new offering that came about to help bolster staffing for Emergency Medical Services. Asst. EMS Director Kent Hall said the idea is pretty simple: Folks with no medical background will start out as an Emergency Vehicle Operator. She or he will attend classes and also go through the road course before taking several shifts of driving with a Field Training Officer who will observe the trainee. During both emergency and non-emergency situations, the trainee will get comfortable driving an ambulance.

Training in CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation), first aid, blood borne pathogens and other basic skills will follow, with guidance from certified provider. Becoming familiar with their equipment, where it’s located on an ambulance and other basic lifesaving skills are also part of the training.

Time will be split between being on an ambulance and in classes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday learning basic EMT from Hall, a seasoned Paramedic who has been teaching for years.

“This schedule gives them (trainees) the opportunity to be home at night with their families,” he said. “Some days they will go class on shift and some days they won’t.”

After three months of training, a trainee can take the test to become a nationally certified Emergency Medical Technician and then apply for certification in South Carolina, he said.

The next step after that is working shifts like other EMTs and Paramedics – 24 hours on and 72 hours off.

“We want to fill several positions immediately and we will have homegrown EMTs in our system, people who are invested in our community,” he said.

People often cite the cost of an EMT class as an obstacle to becoming a first responder. That’s not an issue with the new EMT Trainee program. “They will go to class at no cost – not only that, they’re getting paid with a full-time job with benefits while they’re home at night with their families,” he said.

Insurance, a retirement plan, sick and vacation leave and no out-of-pocket tuition costs are a pretty strong incentive, he said, “and something a little different than what people might be used to if they want to become Emergency Medical Technicians.”

Chief Bobby Hingst, Director of Sumter County EMS, said they look forward to finding new talent and adding to their team.

“We’re going through interviews as we speak and it’s nice to see plenty of interest in this new program,” he said. “If you want to become an EMT, this is your chance.”

Interested? Go to Human Resources at www.sumtercountysc.org
The Sumter Veterans Council held its first meeting in February, but suspended meetings after that following the rise of coronavirus. The group held its second meeting on Aug. 27, 2020, via Zoom to discuss ongoing projects in Sumter that will impact the lives of veterans for years to come.

“Because of all the projects that are forthcoming, we need to keep veterans informed and help them on a larger scale than what I do here in the office,” said Valerie Brunson, Director of Veterans Affairs for Sumter County.

Bill Oden is excited about the new venture and serves as Chairman of the Sumter Veterans Council. A native of Indianapolis, Indiana, Oden holds the rank of Colonel with the South Carolina State Guard and serves as Deputy Chief of Staff for Cyber Security and Intel for the Guard.

His stint in the U.S. Air Force lasted 23 years and once he retired as Master Sergeant, he decided to stay in the area.

“One of our goals, as many folks retire from Shaw, is to keep them here,” he said. “And that will help us in the area of economic development, bringing in industry, because we have a ready-made work force.”

One of the several projects currently in the planning stages is a long-term care home for veterans; several are planned for the state and Sumter has been chosen as one of the sites.

“The nursing home will provide much needed care for veterans and cover a lot of costs someone would normally have to pay,” Oden pointed out.

There’s also a medical clinic for veterans that is in the planning stages, which will be a “big plus for Sumter County,” as veterans won’t have to travel to Dorn V.A. in Columbia for services, Oden said. The clinic will benefit not only Sumter County veterans but those in the region as well, he said.

Chris McKinney is a member of the council who retired from the U.S. Air Force at Shaw Air Force Base as the Command Chief Master Sergeant for the 20th Fighter Wing. He now serves as Executive Director of Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments and said during the meeting the clinic will provide “an opportunity to do something really special,” and will further serve as a model for other locales looking to follow suit in caring for retired veterans.

During the Zoom meeting, Sumter County Administrator Gary Mixon said several sites are being studied for the long-term care facility.

“We’ll hopefully learn something in the next few weeks,” he said. “We’re all very excited about the nursing home.”

City Manager Deron McCormick gave a brief update on the new Veterans Park located adjacent to Shaw Air Force Base. A replica of a World War II-era P-51 fighter is also planned for the park, which features flags from all the military branches and a monument to Tuskegee Airmen from Sumter. The plane is still under construction, he said, and was delayed due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Welcomed as a new member of the Council was Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Scott Zobrist, who served as Commander of the 9th Air Force and will now work with the City of Sumter and Sumter County Government to support the mission of Shaw Air Force Base.