



NEWS

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SC • DEPARTMENT • OF
DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS

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CITY OF AIKEN WINS SILVER PALMETTO AWARD

The City of Aiken has been selected to receive South Carolina's prestigious 2018 Silver Palmetto Award. The award is presented annually by the SC Commission on Disabilities and Special Needs to the South Carolina city or town that made the most outstanding contribution to people with disabilities the previous year.

Department of Disabilities and Special Needs Commissioner Lorri Unumb presented the award to City of Aiken Mayor Rick Osbon, recently during the Municipal Association of South Carolina meeting in Columbia. The Commission is the governing board of the SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN).

Commissioner Unumb congratulated the City of Aiken for the support it provides to people with lifelong disabilities including employment opportunities that have resulted in productive lives and long term friendships. Unumb said, "This relationship is mutual."

Unumb commended the City of Aiken for its diligence in getting to know people with disabilities to build real relationships. "For twenty-four years, the City of Aiken has consistently demonstrated its commitment to work opportunities for the individuals we serve." The Office of Mayor Rick Osbon, Chief Barranco of the Department of Safety, and numerous DPS officers actively participate in the Special Olympics and SC Equestrian Games. The Office of Public Safety is responsive and caring when SLED vets cases involving allegations of abuse of vulnerable citizens. In 2018, the City of Aiken utilized one of Aiken Board's work crew to maintain the downtown business district including Laurens, The Alley, and the Newberry Street Festival areas

with tables and chairs appropriately placed and clean during highly visible during games right in the heart of the city. Five individuals from Tri-Development of Aiken are employed now at minimum wage, and the City is planning to hire more.

The Tri-Development Center of Aiken County invites the City of Aiken to participate in their Safe Kids Walk-to-School safety programs to bring parent and student attention to important safety practices. Officers are on hand to educate the public with infant/child car seat events to ensure proper installation. The City of Aiken partners with the Center in the annual Halloween activities downtown where “efforts are on teaching children to utilize safe practices when trick-or-treating,” noted Unumb. “The Department of Safety officers serve at the annual Cops & Calabash at Fatz Café to raise money for the Special Olympics.”

Mayor Osbon, after asking Jermaine Palmer (an individual with special abilities at the Center) to come up with him at the podium, graciously accepted the Silver Palmetto Award on behalf of the City of Aiken and spoke of the honor and pleasure in serving and caring for its citizens. He explained “It’s honor to receive this recognition and a pleasure to be a partner with these individuals’ lives.” He noted that “the City of Aiken will always be there for our special citizens will continue to relationship with more opportunities to expand its partnership.”

The City of Aiken was nominated for the annual award by the Tri-Development of Aiken County. Cities and towns play a very important role to the local disabilities and special needs boards and those they serve. These successful partnerships are crucial and positively impact and change peoples’ lives. They create opportunities for employment and community involvement.

DDSN is the state agency that provides supports and services to South Carolinians with severe, lifelong disabilities of intellectual and related disabilities, autism, traumatic brain injury and spinal cord injury.

The Silver Palmetto Award is DDSN’s way of thanking municipal governments for their leadership and actions that support people with disabilities.

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