



# around town

[www.historicpickens.com](http://www.historicpickens.com)

MAY 2016

## Department of Commerce Launches New S.C. Innovation Hub *Office of Innovation publishes online resource for the statewide innovation community*

The South Carolina Department of Commerce Office of Innovation today announced the S.C. Innovation Hub - an online tool for the state's innovation community. Supplying individuals and businesses within the technology sector a platform to access resources and connect with one another, this new site allows registered users to post news stories, events and other information.

"Providing the support and infrastructure necessary for our entrepreneurial, technology-based companies to grow is critical to the future of our economy," said Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt. "This new Innovation Hub allows those in this dynamic sector to engage with one another, advancing both their organizations and our state."

In addition to information on relevant technology-related news and upcoming events, the Innovation Hub also features a directory of technology companies and jobs in South Carolina, as well as a community forum to encourage discussion. Users can register to participate by utilizing an existing LinkedIn profile.

"We know that business doesn't sit still. It's constantly changing and evolving. This new tool - a front door to companies working in the technology sector and the knowledge economy - fulfills many requests from the entrepreneurial community for a statewide resource, allowing these rapidly-growing firms to connect and help them succeed," said Secretary Hitt.

For more information, visit [www.scinnovationhub.com](http://www.scinnovationhub.com).

Pickens Revitalization Association is dedicated to the enhancement, preservation and sustainable growth of Pickens' historic downtown area.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### OFFICE

222 W. Main Street, Suite A  
Pickens, SC 29671  
864.878.0105  
9am - 4pm  
Monday - Friday



# FEATURED STORY



“

*What I've seen change over the years is a deep commitment from individuals, corporations and businesses to really make Pickens a better place.*



— Greater Pickens Chamber of Commerce executive director Mike Parrott

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PICKENS — Pickens has really seen a lot of changes over the last few years — very positive changes — and I'm excited about where we've been and where we're going," said Mike Parrott, executive director of the Greater Pickens Chamber of Commerce.

After becoming director of the chamber in May 2009, Parrott will retire next month.

He still recalls his first day of work at the chamber — the day of the Pickens Chamber Golf Tournament.

"We had a good time up there," he said.

He was no stranger to Pickens.

"My father ran a grocery store here in Pickens," Parrott said. "This community was good to our family."

Several factors have converged to help spur growth in Pickens, he said.

"We can kind of see that right now as to where the city is going and where it's been," he said. "City council saw that the city needed to progress a little bit, and that helped. We had a new city administrator at the same time that I came on board. A lot of things came together to consolidate what you're seeing now in Pickens, the direction that Pickens is going."

One of the most important factors, Parrott believes, was the commitment — both from the city and the community as a whole — to becoming a Main Street Community.

"That consolidated a lot of ideas that we've had and just helped make sense of the direction that we wanted to go in," Parrott said. "That was one of the most important things of the last several years. Becoming a Main Street Community really helped."

The Pickens Revitalization Association, led by executive director Allison Fowler, "has really helped Pickens," he said.

# FEATURED STORY



The Doodle Trail has spurred the creation of businesses near the trailheads, such as the Pedal'n Shak, catering to walkers, runners and bicyclists enjoying the trail. The Pedal'n Shak, left, opens for the season on March 30.

"You look at what's happened over the last seven years — the Main Street revitalization effort, the streetscape that expanded out on the West End, the amphitheater," Parrott said. "That creates an atmosphere where a business would want to come into Pickens."

A lot of hard work has gone into securing grants and other funding sources for beneficial projects and initiatives.

"Now you have the Doodle Trail, the commitment from both cities — Easley and Pickens — and how quickly the financial piece for that came together," Parrott said.

"That really has generated a lot of excitement outside of Pickens," he continued. "People know Pickens more than they did."

"We're reaching out to businesses in the area, giving them a voice in the community, in legislative matters and also keeping them informed about different things that are going on, giving them an opportunity to interact with each other. That's a very positive thing that the chamber has done and the city has done over the last several years."

The legislative body needs to come to some type of agreement about the conditions of South Carolina roads, he said.

"It certainly has an impact in Pickens County," Par-

rot says. Education is another vital part of creating a welcoming environment for businesses.

"That is where your workforce development comes from," Parrott said. "If you want to attract industry into an area, they need a skilled, educated workforce, and you only get that from a commitment from the legislature and from the county with the school system."

A perennial challenge is balancing government regulations with small businesses' needs.



Those who burn some calories on the trail can reward themselves by shopping at the nearby Oh Joy! Boutique

# FEATURED STORY



Jason Evans/Courier

The Burgess General Store owner Mark Burgess said running stores runs in the family. The Burgess family has operated stores in the Upstate for generations.

“You need to address the regulation part of government, to make it more streamlined and business-friendly, where it’s easy for a business to open,” he said. “And that’s at all levels of government — that’s city or county or state or whatever.

“When you’re trying to start a business, you’re struggling, trying to get the financial piece together, trying to get a market for your product. It’s always difficult. That’s always a challenge with government.”

The Pickens Innovation Center has potential for “really putting Pickens on the map,” Parrott said.

“It’s bringing individuals in from all over — that has the potential to really help develop the business community of Pickens,” he said.

For some time, city officials, the PRA and the chamber had been discussing creating a business incubator for Pickens, according to Fowler.

“But no one had the expertise or the background to know how to do that and get it started,” she said.

Officials heard about a joint program between the community of Hartsville and Clemson University, Fowler said.

“So we brought those people in to hear a little bit more about it and decided that night we should go for it — if we were going to try this, that was the way to do it,” she said.

# FEATURED STORY



Jason Evans/Courier Pam Smith of Southern Appalachian Outdoors is ready to help customers find all the gear they'll need for a day in the woods or on the water.

Clemson University's Technology Villages program works with cities to support small business and startups.

"There's five of them in the state right now," Fowler said.

The Pickens Innovation Center program came together very quickly, opening in October 2015.

"We were extremely lucky to get in with Clemson and to find our director, Mark Davis, who has worlds of experience in starting new businesses," Fowler said. "He's been a really good cheerleader for the program in town."

Earlier this month, the Pickens Innovation Center launched 13 businesses, including many new businesses.

"In just six short months, it's far exceeded our expectations," Fowler said. "It's been fantastic."

Parrott said the Pickens Innovation Center is another example of different sectors of the Pickens community coming together quickly to make something happen.

"What I've seen change over the years is a deep commitment from individuals, corporations and businesses to really make Pickens a better place, to move it forward," Parrott said. "And that takes hard work, that takes commitment (and) that takes new ideas, being willing to try new things. We're well on our way to transforming the downtown area of Pickens."

"When I was growing up, Pickens had a large industrial base — Singer Corporation, Sangamo, Pickens Mill," Parrott said. "All that's gone away. We're like a lot of small Southern towns, trying to figure out what to do over the years. I think we've got a good formula to move forward right now, with new businesses coming downtown. You can see that in the Appalachian Ale House, Southern Appalachian Outdoors, The Burgess General Store. Buildings downtown are being sold and renovated, and new things are coming in."



Candice Harper Heatherly and her son, Myles, can often be found enjoying a stroll the Doodle Trail.

Courtesy photo

# FEATURED PROMOTIONS and EVENTS

**FREE!**

**FREE!**

## Attractions at the **AMPHITHEATER** HISTORIC PICKENS

### SUMMER 2016

#### june

- 4<sup>th</sup> Jackson Prison Gang \*
- 11<sup>th</sup> Julia Wright Experience
- 18<sup>th</sup> Soul Wobble
- 25<sup>th</sup> Blues Festival

#### july

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Lost Road Rungrace
- 4<sup>th</sup> 4th of July Celebration
- 9<sup>th</sup> Spitzkot
- 16<sup>th</sup> The Trailhead
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Toby & The Chiggers
- 30<sup>th</sup> Jubilee US

#### august

- 6<sup>th</sup> Sweet Potato Pie Kids \*
- 13<sup>th</sup> Jake Gill Band
- 20<sup>th</sup> Steve James Band
- 27<sup>th</sup> The Kiroi Help

\* Cruise-In & Music on Main Event



7pm - 10pm  
114 W. Main Street  
**FREE**



For more information, contact the City of Pickens at 864.678.6421 or [www.cityofpickens.com](http://www.cityofpickens.com)  
or Pickens Revitalization Association at 864.678.0106 or [www.historicpickens.com](http://www.historicpickens.com)

# FEATURED PROMOTIONS and EVENTS



**JUNE 4<sup>th</sup>**

**JEEPS** with the  
**FOLSOM PRISON  
GANG**

Special Presentation & Auction  
by Larry Hinkle &  
Jeep/Chrysler/Dodge/Ram Corporation



**AUGUST 6<sup>th</sup>**

**CUSTOM & CLASSIC  
CARS** with the  
**SWEET POTATO  
PIE KIDS**

West Main Street, Historic Pickens  
Vehicle Registration starting at 5:30pm  
(enter from Garvin Street)  
Entertainment starting at 7pm



Please visit [www.historicpickens.com](http://www.historicpickens.com) for more info!



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## MAY

6th  
Blue Ridge Fest  
6pm-10:30pm

18th  
Attractions at the Amphitheater: Soul Ripple  
7pm-10pm; 114 W. Main Street

## JUNE

4th  
Attractions at the Amphitheater: The Folsom Prison  
Gang  
7pm-10pm; 114 W. Main Street

4th  
Cruise-In & Music on Main: Jeeps  
5:30pm; Main Street Pickens

11th  
Attractions at the Amphitheater: Jamie Wright  
Experience  
7pm-10pm; 114 W. Main Street

25th  
Attractions at the Amphitheater: Blues Revival  
7pm-10pm; 114 W. Main Street

## JULY

4th  
Fourth of July Celebration  
3pm; 114 W. Main Street

2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th  
Attractions at the Amphitheater  
7pm-10pm; 114 W. Main Street  
*See Attractions at the Amphitheater p. 6 for more info*

# THANKS MEMBERS!

Alexander Law Firm	Brock's	Corner Drug Store	Pizza Inn
Cannon Memorial Hospital	City of Pickens	Great Oaks Dental	Pace & Reeves
Pickens Senior Center	Edward Jones	Lindsay Oil Company	State Farm
Pickens Dental Associates	Stockade Antiques	American Legion	TD Bank
Town & Country Florist	Pickens Savings & Loan	Nestfeathers	Shabby & Chic
Behavioral Health Services	Flowers By Virginia	GateHouse Restaurant	Mark Kaiser
East Main Treasures	Foothills Gun and Pawn	Roper Law Firm	9 Round
Pruitt Health	Blue Ridge Electric Coop	TTI/OWT, Inc.	Durham Greene
Oh Joy!	Pickens Federal Credit Union	Pickens Rotary Club	Domino's
South State Bank	Cornell-Dubilier	Buddy & Cisco's Bistro	Enrapt, LLC
Pickens Azalea Festival	Southern App. Outdoors	Appalachian Ale House	Morris on Main
Bee Well Honey	Martha's Marvelous Munchies		