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**FLORENCE**  
SOUTH CAROLINA

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**City of Florence Selected for the Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Award  
for Economic Development at the  
Municipal Association of South Carolina Annual Meeting**

**Media Contacts:**

Teresa Myers Ervin, Mayor – 843-665-3170 or [tervin@cityofflorence.com](mailto:tervin@cityofflorence.com)

Randy Osterman, City Manager – 843-665-3113 or [rosterman@cityofflorence.com](mailto:rosterman@cityofflorence.com)

**FLORENCE, SC** – The City of Florence received state-wide recognition today at the Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) Annual Meeting. Mayor Teresa Myers Ervin accepted the Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Award for Economic Development on behalf of the city.

The awards program began in 1987 and affords local government officials and employees the opportunity to receive deserved recognition for superior and innovative efforts in local government. The program also provides a forum for sharing the best public service ideas in South Carolina.

The City of Florence was selected in the economic development category for the Food, Artisan, and Warehouse District. The development of this district was a result of policy action to leverage existing small-scale manufacturing assets and cultivate local, innovative, creative, food/artisan-driven production businesses to connect downtown to surrounding historic neighborhoods. This was a unique approach to cultivate entrepreneurship and catalyze redevelopment in the area that extends along what was at the time an underutilized corridor. The City then partnered with a private investor to establish Sav A Lot, downtown Florence's first grocery store; the Redbone Alley Sauce plant opened anchoring the east end of the corridor; and the City of Florence constructed a permanent public space to cultivate food entrepreneurs with the creation of the City Center Farmers Market and Commercial Kitchen to spur entrepreneurial growth.

The City continues its work in this district by addressing connectivity and the erosion of real and perceived barriers to entry through property improvement and programmatic support. Construction will soon begin for project Urban Square on the corner of Coit/Evans Street which includes a private investment of \$65 million for a mixed-use development. The city also plans to add a parking garage at this location. Additionally, a new Downtown Master Plan is pending adoption and with it, new technical assistance programs to support food/artisan-based entrepreneurs will be established.

Mayor Teresa Myers Ervin stated, "The development of this district has proven to be a success providing local artisans and food entrepreneurs the opportunity to highlight their talents and grow unique local businesses within our community. We are excited for future private investment within this corridor and the benefit it brings to Florence residents."

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