

2018 JMGBL Awards Application

Submission Date	2018-06-22 15:57:38
This application is for:	Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award
Project Title	Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center brings healthcare back to "Healthcare Desert"
County/Countries	Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun and Orangeburg
Staff Contact	Angela Stringer
Job Title	Special Projects
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Please provide a summary of your entry (no more than 100 words) to be used in a handout for the awards competition and included in press releases/publications. You may either type the summary in the text box or upload it as an attachment below.	After many attempts over the past decade to attract and keep quality healthcare in the Bamberg-Barnwell region, the right people and partnerships aligned with the right circumstances to bring about the vision and the concept for the Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center. Recognizing that the region had become a "healthcare desert", the Regional Medical Center of Orangeburg and Calhoun Counties stepped in to fill the need. Thanks to the tireless support of Orangeburg, Calhoun, Bamberg and Barnwell county councils, their Legislators and many partners, the Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center is bringing accessible, quality healthcare back to the "Healthcare Desert."
Presentations may include more than one speaker; however, each speaker should be aware that the 10-minute time limit is strictly enforced. Please list the name, title, and e-mail address of each speaker:	Joey Preston, Administrator, Bamberg County, joeypreston@gmail.com Trent Kinard, Councilman, Bamberg County, kinardk@bambergcounty.sc.gov Lee Prickett, Jr., Administrator, Calhoun County, lprickett@calhouncounty.sc.gov Harold M. Young, Administrator, Orangeburg County, hyoung@orangeburgcounty.org Charles Jowles, Sr., County Councilman, Barnwell County Kathy Rhoad, Interim Associate VP, Strategic Planning and Marketing, RMC of Orangeburg and Calhoun Counties, kcrhoad@regmed.com Danny Black, President & CEO, Southern Carolina Alliance, dblack@southerncarolina.org
Will any of the speakers need accommodations (wheelchair accessibility, etc.) during the competition?	No

SOUTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

**BARRETT LAWRIMORE
REGIONAL COOPERATION COMPETITION**

**Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center brings healthcare
back to "Healthcare Desert"**

JUNE 22, 2018



"Necessity is the mother of invention"
is an English-language proverb.
It means, roughly, that the primary driving
force for most new **inventions** is a **NEED**.

**BAMBERG COUNTY, BARNWELL COUNTY, CALHOUN COUNTY, CITY OF
DENMARK, ORANGEBURG COUNTY**

I. Benefit/Importance of Project

1. Why was this project undertaken?

The vision for the **Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center** project was born out of a confluence of circumstances that left the Greater Salkehatchie Region lacking access to healthcare. After years of struggling to stay afloat, Bamberg County Hospital closed in April 2012. In January 2016, Southern Palmetto Hospital (Barnwell) closed its doors due to financial woes. Recognizing that the region had become a “healthcare desert”, Danny Black, President/CEO of Southern Carolina Alliance (SCA), the South Carolina Office of Rural Health CEO Graham Adams, along with Bamberg and Barnwell county councils reached out to larger neighboring hospital providers in Aiken, Columbia, Charleston, Walterboro and others that might be willing to partner with the individual counties to “rehab” their existing buildings so that each would once again have a local, county hospital. The conversations always concluded that it is more expensive to rehab an older building, bringing it “up to code” (ADA, electrical, fire and others), while equipping with newer technology such as telemedicine than to build a new facility. After years of seeking a solution, it became apparent to legislators that it was unlikely that Bamberg and Barnwell or any rural county would have the ability to build and sustain a full-service hospital and that larger hospital systems were not interested in an investment which had little chance of even a small Return on Investment.

Recognizing the hospital closures and lack of timely access to medical facilities had created a dire situation in Bamberg and Barnwell, Senator Brad Hutto, Senator John Matthews, Representative Lonnie Hosey and Representative Justin Bamberg reached out to former South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCHHS) Director Christian Soura as well as Representative Ronald Smith (chair of the House Committee on Health Affairs) Senator Thomas Alexander (chair of the Senate Committee on Health), began expanding their search for a viable solution to the newly formed “healthcare desert.” Although it just didn’t seem possible that in modern day America, there could be an area lacking timely access to a hospital, this was unfortunately the case in the Greater Salkehatchie region of the State after the closure of the Bamberg and Barnwell hospitals.

After much research, discussion and several unsuccessful attempts to attract a healthcare provider to the region, the idea of a standalone, 24-hour emergency center came into focus as a viable solution – not ideal, but sufficient to meet truly emergent needs. This concept quickly gained acceptance by the leadership team because of its scalability – it would start out as a free-standing emergency center but could later expand to allow for a broader medical campus.

2. What is the significance of this project to your community as a whole? How does it relate in importance to the other problems in your community?

Timely access to emergent healthcare is the ultimate goal and the ultimate result of the **Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center**. The location of the new Emergency Center, on Highway 70 between Bamberg and Denmark, is approximately 15 minutes from the county seat of each of the four participating counties and Allendale which translates into faster treatment and more lives saved than is possible currently. The facility is being equipped with communication infrastructure to enhance collaboration with the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) and allow patients access to highly trained physicians/specialists who can interact with patients and collaborate with emergency room doctors although they are not onsite.

The current lack of a hospital/emergency room has tremendously hampered the area’s ability to attract industry that would bring much needed jobs and highly skilled workers to an area that is disadvantaged. Bamberg and Barnwell counties are designated Promise Zones – “high

poverty communities where the federal government partners with local leaders to increase economic activity, improve educational opportunities, leverage private investment, reduce violent crime, enhance public health and address other priorities identified by the community.”

The infrastructure put in place to service the Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center will have a much broader impact in that it also lays the groundwork for future economic growth in an area of the county that previously had little to no utility infrastructure. Communication infrastructure provided by AT&T will also enhance broadband/internet capabilities in the region which have long been lacking and are increasingly necessary for today’s educational and economic opportunities. The installation of water, sewer and electrical infrastructure make it possible for industry to come to an area that was not viable for growth previously.

3. *How much of the county’s population is benefited by the project? In what specific ways are different groups of citizens within the county better off than before?*

Of course, access to healthcare for ALL the residents of Bamberg and Barnwell counties is the number one priority of this project. However, these two rural communities have a large population of senior citizens, who deal with more health issues than younger populations and will greatly benefit from the presence and location of the new Emergency Center. Whether the emergency is a heart attack, stroke, snake bite, or anything else, having timely access to emergency care can mean the difference between life and death.

The Regional Medical Center of Orangeburg and Calhoun counties (RMC) took the first step to assist the residents of Bamberg County after their Hospital shut down. RMC opened the Bamberg Urgent Care Center at 185 McGee Street, with the hope of expanding services at a later date. The Urgent Care Center has continued to fill the gap, granting access to a level of healthcare for citizens 7-days a week during the hours of 10 am to 9 pm. However, the new Free-Standing 24/7 Emergency Center, which is more centrally located on 10-acres adjacent to Highway 70 in Denmark, is a game-changer for both Bamberg and Barnwell county residents. The new location is approximately 15 minutes from each county seat. Once the new Emergency Center is fully operational, the Urgent Care Center staff and equipment will transition to the new facility.

4. *What degree of success did the project attain? What major objectives were achieved?*

There are many successes wrapped up in this project. One of the first was the Bamberg Urgent Care Center. In October 2013, RMC stepped in to fill the healthcare gap left by the closure of the Bamberg County Hospital with an Urgent Care Center. According to former RMC President Tom Dandridge, “it was an effort to reach out beyond traditional service areas to supplement the area’s local doctors.” The Bamberg Urgent care facility remains open, serving patients from 10 am until 9 pm, 7 days per week. Bamberg Urgent Care Center was a much-needed incremental step toward the goal, “a part of the broader vision to embrace healthcare for the long term and in a comprehensive manner.”

Securing funding was one of the biggest challenges of the entire project and one of the toughest objectives achieved. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the legislative delegation, the project received a SC Hospital Transformation Grant, the linchpin to the entire project. South Carolina Health and Human Services (SCHHS) brought forth the idea of increasing RMC’s Medicaid-Medicare reimbursement rate from 48% to 80%. This sealed the deal by giving RMC more financial stability that allowed them to take on constructing and operating the Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center. Utility partners (AT&T, SCE&G and Edisto Electric Cooperative with the help of Santee Cooper) worked to provide the required vital services. The City of Denmark, the location of the new Emergency Center, successfully applied for a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Regional Development Agency (RDA) grant to cover water and sewer. USDA was also instrumental in funding equipment through 7 grants totaling \$350,000. Additionally, the State budgeted \$600,000 for equipment in the 2018 budget. (***Budget Summary on page 5**)

As the Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center becomes fully functional, the Bamberg Urgent Care Center will transition its doctors, nurses, staff and equipment over to the new Emergency Center. Since the true success of this project is predicated on saving lives rather than brick and mortar, the greatest objective will be achieved when the first patient experiencing an emergency is treated at the new Emergency Center.

Bringing Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun and Orangeburg counties together to provide a regional solution to local issues was a tremendous achievement as displayed in the Emergency Center project, but it also lays the groundwork for future collaboration. This is best summed up by Danny Black, "This has been a labor of cooperation for the region and we intend to build on this momentum."

II. Project Effort/Difficulty

1. What did your county have to do to accomplish its objectives?

The four counties of Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun and Orangeburg, along with their municipalities participated in this project. The County Councils deliberated and voted affirmatively to move forward on the new Emergency Medical Center.

Calhoun County and **Orangeburg County councils and administrators** agreed to support this project, realizing the potential risk but choosing to wholeheartedly lend their support to the project in order to extend quality healthcare to Bamberg and Barnwell residents.

Bamberg County administration and council, working alongside the **SCA** worked to convince the owner of the Solar Farm who had an option on the desired land in Denmark, to allow the purchase of 10 acres that would serve as the location for the Free-Standing Emergency Center. This site is the preferred location named in the feasibility study conducted in 2016 by Dixon Hughes Goodman, LLP. Individual Bamberg council members have been involved in seeking a healthcare solution for their citizens since the Bamberg County Hospital began having financial issues several years before the hospital closure.

Barnwell County administration and council members also commenced seeking a healthcare solution for their citizens once the Southern Palmetto Hospital's financial troubles began. This project meets the most urgent healthcare needs of their community and has the future capacity for a broader health campus with more offerings for the region.

The **City of Denmark** is continuing to work hand in hand with the leadership team – spearheaded by the administrator and the mayor, Denmark took the initiative and successfully applied for an \$497,456 SC Rural Infrastructure Authority (SC RIA) grant to fund the water and sewer infrastructure needed for the new Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center.

2. What challenges occurred during the project? Were there any community concerns?

At the onset of this process, Bamberg and Barnwell counties desired to have a provider come in and rehab their existing hospital facilities so that each county would have a hospital to serve their residents. After many discussions with various providers, it became apparent that this approach was cost prohibitive and therefore no provider was interested. The one Midwest provider that was interested in building a regional hospital would have required both counties to give up their certificates of need. Since certificates of need are normally difficult to acquire, neither county was interested at that time.

SCA partnered with the counties to market the region for economic development purposes. As time passed, the county hospitals began experiencing financial troubles which eventually led to

their closures. Recognizing that potential industry seeks an ample, trained workforce, a pleasant quality of life and timely access to healthcare, SCA began encouraging a regional solution since this was rapidly becoming a regional issue. During this time RMC opened the Bamberg Urgent Care Center, which helped with urgent care, but was not equipped for true emergency care.

Once the legislative delegation and SCA had a handle on the initial construction funding and RMC had evaluated the feasibility study and made the decision to be the “parent hospital,” it fell to the delegation and SCA to bring consensus among the partnering counties. They attended council meetings and met with stakeholders across the region and ultimately achieved buy-in from the individual communities and their residents.

Of course, funding was a major challenge throughout the project and will continue to be. (Funding is discussed in depth below in question 4).

Another future concern pertains to getting patients to use the new Emergency Center. Without patients, the Emergency Center will not survive. It is human nature to be loyal to one doctor and be reluctant to change, so the question becomes how to bring people back and get them to utilize the new facility to sustain it for the long term. Physicians, nurses and staff will have to provide high quality medical services in such a way that residents have confidence in the facility as well as the physicians.

3. *What were the nature and extent of the county government's efforts to alleviate the problem(s)? How difficult was it to accomplish the project's goals and/or objectives?*

Council members and administration with Bamberg, Barnwell and Denmark were very candid in that they felt blessed that this project was brought to them. Their main difficulty was in providing accurate information about the project to their individual citizens to alleviate any questions and concerns about how the regional solution would affect them.

In addition, Bamberg worked with SCA to secure permission to purchase the land (10 acres) from the Solar Company that held the option to purchase. The City of Denmark was successful in applying for and obtaining for a \$497,456 SC RIA Grant to fund water and sewer for the project. In the near future, there may be additional grants that the individual counties can apply for to further the project toward becoming a regional campus.

On the other hand, Calhoun and Orangeburg counties who own RMC had to look at the bottom line. Although RMC and its board are autonomous, the counties were aware of how the financing, construction and operating costs could affect their residents. Fortunately for all four counties, the legislative delegation, SCA, SC Office of Rural Health and USDA did a lot of the legwork to provide additional financial stability to RMC and thereby alleviate most, if not all of their concerns.

4. *Was financing the project an obstacle? Were there any unusual factors inherent in financing the project?*

Initially, Senators Hutto and Matthews approached SCHHS, tasked with managing the South Carolina Hospital Transformation Fund, about funding the cost of the structure, an estimated \$8 million, through two South Carolina Hospital Transformation Grants. (The SC Hospital Transformation Fund was created by the General Assembly through a budget proviso in July 2014 “to help qualifying hospitals transition to more sustainable models of service delivery that meet the needs of their community and reduce reliance on inpatient admissions, surgery or high-tech diagnostics. This includes encouraging new long-term partnerships between rural hospitals and community, tertiary and teaching facilities to ensure seamless, timely and high quality clinical care for patients in rural areas of the state.”)

Although Transformation Grants cap at \$4 million per project, the legislators argued unsuccessfully for a total of \$8 million - \$4 million per county since both Bamberg and Barnwell counties would be positively affected by the resulting free-standing 24-hour emergency facility.

During this same time, RMC, was facing difficult times. RMC was struggling financially due to their low 48% reimbursement rate for Medicaid and Medicare patients. This coupled with their high indigent patient population had them seeking relief.

According to Medicaid.gov, Federal law requires that state Medicaid programs make Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) payments to qualifying hospitals that serve a large number of Medicaid and uninsured individuals. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) was set to phase out DSH payments in lieu of transitioning all uninsured patients to Medicaid-Medicare. However, some states including South Carolina, chose not to participate in the Medicaid-Medicare expansion. This put a strain on most hospitals but hit rural hospitals especially hard.

Additionally, after the closure of Bamberg County Hospital, RMC had stepped in to open the Bamberg Urgent Care Center in 2013 which was continuing to provide service and fill the healthcare gap for former patients of both Bamberg and Barnwell hospitals.

Acknowledging RMC's financial concerns and considering that before the closures, Bamberg and Barnwell hospitals were classified as "rural" and both received a 100% Medicaid-Medicare reimbursement rate, SCHHS made a counter offer to Senators Hutto and Matthews. They proposed increasing RMC's reimbursement rate from 48% to 80% in addition to the \$4 million Hospital Transformation Grant for construction if RMC would be willing to take on the tasks of constructing and operating the new Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center. The Senators approached RMC with the offer. Although RMC would potentially lose funds (\$1-2 million annually) in operating the Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center, they would gain a stronger presence in the region. Additionally, the increased reimbursement rate should make up the missing \$4 million in construction costs and should permanently serve to offset the anticipated operational losses of the Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center, while also bolstering RMC from the previous 48% to 80% reimbursement rate.

FUNDING:	\$8.63 million
<i>SC Hospital Transformation Grant (originally \$4 million) -this is a one-time grant</i>	\$3.6 million
<i>Increased Reimbursement Rate (48% to 80%) approximate revenue annually</i>	\$5 million
<i>(Increase is anticipated to make up for the construction shortage)</i>	
TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COSTS	\$8.63 million

5. Did any agencies, citizen groups, or other organizations assist your county with this project? Did their participation pose particular challenges or offer unique contributions or benefits?

Each stakeholder brought unique strengths to the table as they worked together to craft the path forward for the Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center.

The **Legislative Delegation (Senators Hutto and Matthews, Representatives Hosey and Bamberg)** went above and beyond the call of duty, providing the leadership to bring this project to fruition and to work out the details of the solution including the funding. They also negotiated the agreement with **RMC** to construct and operate the new Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center. Having **Senator Thomas Alexander**, chairman of the Senate Health Committee and **Representative Garry R. Smith**, Chairman of the House Health Committee, who live in counties that are dealing with similar healthcare concerns, view themselves as stakeholders in the success of this project was definitely a plus.

Southern Carolina Alliance, Greater Salkehatchie's regional economic development partnership (Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper) had the original vision for a regional response to healthcare in the region. The SCA Board approved the purchase of the land (10 acres) as well as gifting a portion of the purchase price - \$50,000 to the project. The remainder will be paid back and is included in the \$8.63 million construction cost.

The South Carolina Office of Rural Health (Graham Adams) worked with the legislative delegation, SCA, RMC and the individual counties (Orangeburg, Calhoun, Bamberg, Barnwell), from vision to reality by providing valuable insight, research and support.

The **Regional Medical Center of Orangeburg and Calhoun counties (RMC)** is the key player in this entire project. The RMC board, administration and staff are to be applauded for their willingness to take on the construction and operation of the Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center. This is a huge undertaking since they are already running a large regional hospital as well as Bamberg Urgent Care Center. They have now assumed the responsibility for a Free-Standing Emergency Center in another county. Although RMC already commands the majority of the market share in the Bamberg county market with the Bamberg Urgent Care Center, this project extends their reach and comes with additional construction, recruiting, staffing (20 new positions including 5 board certified emergency room physicians), more meetings, deadlines and fluctuating cash flows.

Edisto Electric Cooperative, in collaboration with **Santee Cooper** provided the \$60,000 to provide dedicated electrical infrastructure to power the hospital.

SCE&G agreed to provide the gas for the Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center.

Several **USDA Regional Development Authority (RDA)** grants were successfully applied for and are included in the construction costs.

The South Carolina General Assembly passed a budget proviso in the 2014 budget which created the **South Carolina Hospital Transformation Fund** and tasked the **South Carolina Health and Human Services (SCHHS)** with oversight of the fund. SCHHS put up the \$3.6 million Hospital Transformation Grant and approved RMC's Medicaid-Medicare reimbursement rate increase from 48% to 80%.

SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) approved the project and worked with the Legislative Delegation during the funding process.

The challenge was in gathering these diverse partners and arriving at consensus as to the final vision as well as the implementation of the project. As with any collaborative effort, each individual county, city and town had to negotiate and compromise, setting aside individual goals for the greater good – providing quality healthcare to the citizens in the region.

6. Are there any unresolved problems or other goals left to tackle?

The success of the Free Standing 24-hour Emergency Center will be directly dependent upon the individual EMS units of both counties using it. There is discussion of housing an EMS substation onsite that will be a benefit to the local EMS agencies as well as an incentive for EMS to utilize the Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center.

Future plans also include broadening the facility into a regional campus, a hub with space for a multitude of opportunities such as Mental Health Counseling, a public pharmacy and other health-related needs. The main goal of this project is to build future collaboration and make this campus a true regional concept, pooling local resources to achieve better quality healthcare for the region.

County lines have historically been a boundary that defined an individual's sphere of services such as medical, educational, etc. Today, this is not necessarily the case. The ability to travel longer

distances quicker has blurred the lines of those geographical boundaries and invalidated the idea that every county must have its own hospital, college, etc. What is most important is access, not in which city or county the resource is located. This Pilot Project is a testament that community well-being can be attainable regionally. The true test is when an emergency takes place - whether heart attack, snake bite, stroke – and seconds matter. Success means having an emergency center nearby, staffed, equipped and accessible.

III. Project Originality/Innovation

1. Justify the uniqueness of this project. What makes it different from other projects designed to achieve the same objective?

According to the SC Office of Rural Health, a free-standing/stand-alone emergency department "must be an extension of an existing hospital emergency department, perform the same functions as an emergency department found on a hospital campus. They are not the same as Urgent Care Centers, having more advanced licensure requirements and scope of practice – following the Certificate of Need (CON) requirement to help reduce unnecessary duplication of healthcare facilities and services." They traditionally must be available 24 hours, 7 days per week, have board certified emergency medicine physicians, have a CLIA-certified automated & point of care testing, as well as capabilities to provide ultrasound, x-ray and CT,

The Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center is different from those in metropolitan areas which are, for all practical purposes, "substations or stop-offs" that basically funnel patients to their "parent hospitals". Located on 10-acres, the Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center, a free-standing 20,500 square-foot facility, is a true ER, having 24-hour emergency care including CT scan, X-Ray and ultrasound diagnostic imaging as well as lab and observation services. This regional problem required a regional solution put together by regional partners.

The Bamberg-Barnwell facility is unique in several ways. Legislators refer to the 24-hour Free-Standing Emergency Center as a **Pilot Project** to bring together regional resources to fill the gap in what is being referred to as a "healthcare desert".

The Greater Salkehatchie region is fortunate to have dedicated and hard-working legislators who roll up their sleeves and become part of the solution. This project truly showcases this delegation's collaboration and achievement. Across the line – Democrat and Republican titles aside – when it comes down to a need, these legislators own it and they work together as one tremendous team to make it happen.

Spearheaded by the Legislative Delegation (Senators Hutto and Matthews, Representatives Hosey and Bamberg), and SCA, this project took a non-traditional, regional approach to address the Greater Salkehatchie "healthcare desert" resulting from changes and uncertainties in healthcare during the last decade. Although there are other "free-standing" emergency rooms in the state, this project and the approach taken are unique in both their origins coverage. The success of this project required the collaboration of every partner – counties/cities councils and administrations, federal and state government agencies, utilities, communities and RMC which is owned by Orangeburg and Calhoun counties. All of these partners – the organizations and the people came together, setting aside individual desires and goals to work toward a common goal – to bring life to the "healthcare desert" – to give the citizens of Bamberg and Barnwell counties a true free-standing emergency center, which until recently was an unusual concept.

2. Do you know of any other similar programs in South Carolina? If so, how is your program different?

According to the SC Office of Rural Health, “South Carolina has six free-standing emergency departments with two more under construction which includes the Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center.” All of these facilities “seek to improve access to emergency care in areas otherwise removed from expedient treatment options. However, the Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center is the only one of its kind - located in a “healthcare desert” to meet the needs of those without timely access to emergency medical treatment. It is also unique because it is a labor of cooperation with multiple and diverse partner who came together for the benefit of the Salkehatchie Region’s citizens.

3. *What innovations were required in accomplishing your objectives?*

The idea of a free-standing emergency room is a very recent innovation designed to provide emergency healthcare to patients when minutes make the difference between life and death. The SC legislature made it known that they do not want the reputation of having “healthcare deserts” in the State and the legislative team with their words as well as their actions, worked alongside Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun and Orangeburg counties as well as SCA, the SC Office of Rural Health, SCDHEC and USDA to find and implement a solution. With so many unknowns in the future of healthcare, the Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center is the Pilot Project that epitomizes SC Hospital Transformation Plan and serves as a healthcare model in underserved areas for all of South Carolina as well as across the country. This entire situation, especially the avenues for funding was innovative on the part of the State in that it started at the top with the General Assembly recognizing the rapidly changing healthcare realm and preparing for the fallout by setting aside funds – the SC Hospital Transformation Funds with SCDHEC as oversight for grants. Additionally, SCHHS used an innovative approach by increasing the Medicaid-Medicare reimbursement rates for RMC facilities in order to help offset anticipated annual operational losses of \$1-2 million for the Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center. RMC nor any other healthcare provider would look at the Bamberg-Barnwell dilemma as a money-making venture since the two counties have a poor patient payer mix (insured vs. uninsured, Medicaid-Medicare).

4. *Who provided the creativity and imagination in your project?*

The groundwork for this project began a decade ago. Smaller, rural hospitals began struggling to stay afloat with taxpayer funding. SCA was in the trenches with local governments as the healthcare tide was beginning to turn, seeking to bring a regional solution to replace the county-funded hospitals that were no longer sustainable. In 2012, Bamberg’s hospital closed; Barnwell’s hospital closed its doors in 2016, leaving the two counties without 24/7 emergency room care.

During 2014, the SC General Assembly, SCHHS, and the SC Office of Rural Health worked together to craft Budget Proviso 33.33, otherwise known as the SC Hospital Transformation Program. This proviso was basically created to ensure that all South Carolinians had timely access to quality healthcare by strengthening existing rural hospitals and encouraging partnerships of healthcare systems to foster a more sustainable healthcare landscape, thereby eliminating the prospect of “healthcare deserts”. Senators Hutto and Matthews, Representatives Hosey and Bamberg picked up the reins on the “medical desert” dilemma in the Greater Salkehatchie region. The consensus being “this is not a business model that will ever attract a provider that desires to make money but when the public welfare is at stake, the need for the common, greater good is just cause for state and local governments to step in and do what is right.”

After many attempts over the past decade to bring and keep quality healthcare in the Bamberg-Barnwell region, the right people and partnerships aligned with the right circumstances to bring about the vision and the concept for the Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center.



Regional Emergency Care

The Regional Medical Center is the only emergency treatment hospital in a four-county area including Orangeburg, Calhoun, Bamberg and Barnwell counties.



TMC the Regional Medical Center

3

RMC's ER for Bamberg is good news

The Times and Democrat

Jun 19, 2017

The Regional Medical Center stepped in to fill a void when Bamberg County's hospital closed in 2012. Now RMC is about to make a major commitment to bring expanded medical service to the county.

RMC is proposing an \$8.63 million, 20,500-square-foot emergency department for the counties of Bamberg and Barnwell, which has also seen its hospital close. Construction on the facility located between Bamberg and Denmark could begin this summer.

The new 24/7 ER will be funded by the State of South Carolina through a one-time, \$3.6 million Transformation Fund Grant and additional funds resulting from the region's designation as a persistent poverty area. Other funding has been committed through the local community, according to RMC.

The development is good news as Bamberg County has been without an emergency room since its hospital closed. The freestanding emergency department is to include 24-hour emergency care including CT scan, X-ray, ultrasound diagnostic imaging and lab and observation services.

RMC began operating an urgent care facility in Bamberg County a year after the hospital's closure in a logical extension of the hospital's services to a neighboring county. But Bamberg County leaders have been determined to retain medical services beyond urgent care.

A month ago, County Administrator Joey Preston acknowledged the county was in talks with a health care provider about a 24-hour ER center.

Hopes were high, though other efforts at opening an ER, one through Hospital Corporation of America and the other in conjunction with Colleton Medical Center HCA South Atlantic Hospitals, were not successful.

RMC was concerned about acceptance when it expanded services into Bamberg. It found support and has decided it can do what others could not or would not.

Community support in Bamberg – and Barnwell counties -- will be of continuing importance with the new facility. Branching out to provide services carries risks for RMC in the face of so many health care question marks. The hospital that is owned by Orangeburg and Calhoun counties must make strategic decisions based on its fiscal health as well as the health care needs of those it serves.

Five years after Bamberg County Hospital closed its doors, new doors to health care are opening in what we hope will be a continuing and growing partnership between two counties that have every reason to work together in a regional way.

PROGRESS AUGUST 2017: RMC building medical center in Bamberg Jan 28, 2018
LARRY HARDY, T&D



A groundbreaking ceremony was held in August for a freestanding emergency medical center for Bamberg and Barnwell counties. The facility is on 10 acres of land on U.S. Highway 70 between Denmark and Barnwell.

Denmark resident Doris Wright says it's been a trying experience to not have access to local emergency care for the past five years.

"It is something that we are in desperate need of," she said.

Wright was one of a few hundred people attending the Aug. 8 groundbreaking for the new freestanding emergency center that will serve Bamberg and Barnwell counties.

"We are just elated to have this facility come and be a part of our community. It gives us hope and inspiration," Wright said.

The Regional Medical Center of Orangeburg and Calhoun Counties is building the \$8.63 million, 20,500-square-foot freestanding emergency department. It will be located on 10 acres of land adjacent to Highway 70 between Denmark and Barnwell.

Construction is projected to take a year.

Denmark resident Fredrema Odom said the emergency facility is just what the doctor ordered for the area.

"We had nowhere to go if we got sick except for Orangeburg, or Columbia, Aiken or Augusta," Odom said.

When she goes to a doctor, she travels all the way to Aiken, Odom said. "It is a long ways."

Bamberg County has been without an emergency room since 2012, when the county hospital was closed. Southern Palmetto Hospital, formerly Barnwell County Hospital, announced its closure in January 2016.

RMC opened an urgent care center in Bamberg in 2013. That facility will close once the new emergency department is up and running.

The new facility will include 24-hour emergency care with CT scan, X-ray and ultrasound diagnostic imaging, lab and observation services.

The facility will have everything needed for a standard emergency department, including 13 observation rooms, and will be equipped to handle ambulances and walk-in traffic.

Three observation beds will be available to take care of patients overnight. Incoming patients will also have access to diagnostic, outpatient lab and X-ray services.

The facility will have at least six doctors providing services to patients.

The emergency center will also use RMC's current affiliation with the Medical University of South Carolina to provide tele-medicine services at its facility.

The new, 24/7 facility will be funded by the state of South Carolina through a one-time, \$3.6 million Transformation Fund Grant.

About \$100,000 was made available from U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development through Congressman James Clyburn's 10-20-30 initiative. The initiative seeks to provide 10 percent of federal money to areas that have been in persistent poverty for over 30 years.

Other funding has been committed by local community stakeholders.

Please Join Us



Bamberg/Barnwell Emergency Medical Center *Groundbreaking*

Tuesday, August 8 | 10:00 am
Highway 70, West of Denmark

This Groundbreaking Ceremony

celebrates the beginning of construction of an \$8.6 million, 20,500 square-foot, freestanding Emergency Medical Center for Bamberg and Barnwell counties.

The facility will include 24-hour emergency care with CT scan, X-Ray and ultrasound diagnostic imaging, lab and observation services. Located on 10 acres of land adjacent to U.S. Highway 70 between the cities of Denmark and Barnwell, the Emergency Medical Center will be easily accessible for the populations of both Bamberg and Barnwell counties.

It is projected that construction will take 12 months. The name of the new Emergency Medical Center is under development and will be announced in the near future.

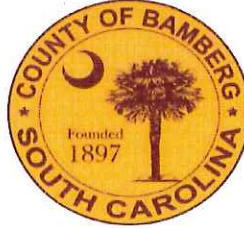
+ rMC the Regional Medical Center

803-395-2200 | www.trmchealth.org

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Trent Kinard
Vice Chairman-District #1
Sharon Hammond
District #2
Larry Haynes
District #3
Joe Guess, Jr.
District #4
Isaiah Odom
District #5
Evert Comer, Jr.
District #6
Clint Carter
Chairman-District #7

Bamberg County



Joey R. Preston
Administrator
Rose R. Shepherd
Clerk to Council

June 19, 2018

Barrett Lawrimore Regional Cooperation Competition
SC Association of Counties
ATTN: Anna Berger & Competition Judges
PO Box 8207
Columbia, SC 29202-8207

Dear Ms. Berger and Competition Judges:

It is with great pleasure that the Bamberg County Council and County Administrator support the submission of the Bamberg-Barnwell Free-standing Emergency Department for the 2018 Barrett Lawrimore Regional Cooperation Award Competition.

This vital project has been in the works for quite some time. We are proud to have worked collaboratively with our legislative delegation (Senator Brad Hutto, Senator John Matthews, Representative Lonnie Hosey, and Representative Justin Bamberg), the Regional Medical Center of Orangeburg and Calhoun Counties, the Office of Rural Health, SC DHEC, and USDA as well as the administration and councils of Barnwell, Orangeburg and Calhoun counties to make this vision become a reality. This regional emergency facility has been a long time coming and will make emergency care accessible to all the residents that have previously existed in a healthcare desert.

We are proud to be a part of this regional team. We respectfully join our support to this project is certain to be a game-changer for a brighter economic future in the Bamberg-Barnwell communities.

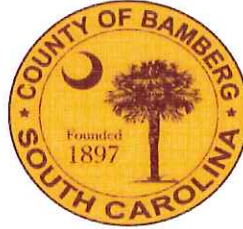
Respectfully submitted,

Joey Preston, Bamberg County Administrator
Members of Bamberg County Council

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Trent Kinard
Vice Chairman-District #1
Sharon Hammond
District #2
Larry Haynes
District #3
Joe Guess, Jr.
District #4
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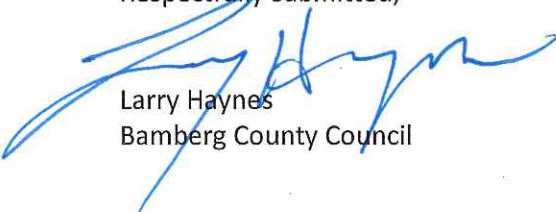
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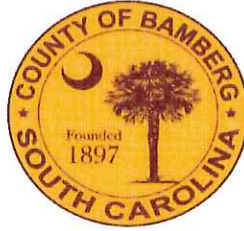
Respectfully submitted,


Larry Haynes
Bamberg County Council

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Trent Kinard
Vice Chairman-District #1
Sharon Hammond
District #2
Larry Haynes
District #3
Joe Guess, Jr.
District #4
Isaiah Odom
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Bamberg County



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Administrator
Rose R. Shepherd
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June 19, 2018

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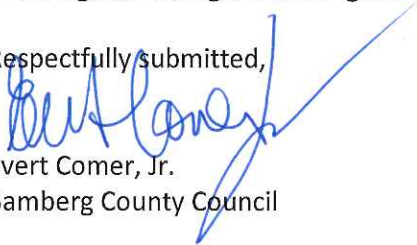
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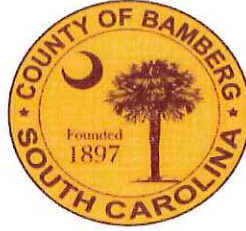
Respectfully submitted,


Evert Comer, Jr.
Bamberg County Council

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Trent Kinard
Vice Chairman-District #1
Sharon Hammond
District #2
Larry Haynes
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June 19, 2018

Barrett Lawrimore Regional Cooperation Competition
SC Association of Counties
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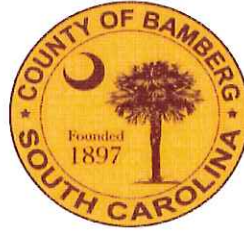
Respectfully submitted,

Isaiah Odom
Bamberg County Council

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Trent Kinard
Vice Chairman-District #1
Sharon Hammond
District #2
Larry Haynes
District #3
Joe Guess, Jr.
District #4
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Bamberg County



Joey R. Preston
Administrator
Rose R. Shepherd
Clerk to Council

June 19, 2018

Barrett Lawrimore Regional Cooperation Competition
SC Association of Counties
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PO Box 8207
Columbia, SC 29202-8207


Dear Ms. Berger and Competition Judges:

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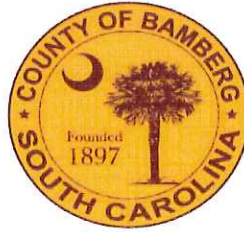
Respectfully submitted,


Joseph Guess, Jr.
Bamberg County Council

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Trent Kinard
Vice Chairman-District #1
Sharon Hammond
District #2
Larry Haynes
District #3
Joe Guess, Jr.
District #4
Isaiah Odom
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Bamberg County



Joey R. Preston
Administrator
Rose R. Shepherd
Clerk to Council

June 19, 2018

Barrett Lawrimore Regional Cooperation Competition
SC Association of Counties
ATTN: Anna Berger & Competition Judges
PO Box 8207
Columbia, SC 29202-8207

Dear Ms. Berger and Competition Judges:

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This vital project has been in the works for quite some time. We are proud to have worked collaboratively with our legislative delegation (Senator Brad Hutto, Senator John Matthews, Representative Lonnie Hosey, and Representative Justin Bamberg), the Regional Medical Center of Orangeburg and Calhoun Counties, the Office of Rural Health, SC DHEC, and USDA as well as the administration and councils of Barnwell, Orangeburg and Calhoun counties to make this vision become a reality. This regional emergency facility has been a long time coming and will make emergency care accessible to all the residents that have previously existed in a healthcare desert.

We are proud to be a part of this regional team. We respectfully join our support to this project is certain to be a game-changer for a brighter economic future in the Bamberg-Barnwell communities.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sharon Hammond".

Sharon Hammond
Bamberg County Council



CHARLES LOWELL JOWERS, SR.
Councilman, District 4
Barnwell County Government
57 Wall Street
Barnwell, SC 29812
(803) 541-1000



June 21, 2018

Barrett Lawrimore Regional Cooperation Competition
SC Association of Counties
ATTN: Anna Berger & Competition Judges
PO Box 8207
Columbia, SC 29202-8207

Dear Ms. Berger and Competition Judges:

It is with great pleasure that I, as chairman of Barnwell County Council, support the submission of the Bamberg-Barnwell Free-standing Emergency Department for the 2018 Barrett Lawrimore Regional Cooperation Award Competition.

This vital project has been in the works for quite some time. We are proud to have worked collaboratively with our legislative delegation (Senator Brad Hutto, Senator John Matthews, Representative Lonnie Hosey, and Representative Justin Bamberg), the Regional Medical Center of Orangeburg and Calhoun Counties, the Office of Rural Health, SC DHEC, and USDA as well as the administration and councils of Orangeburg, Bamberg, and Calhoun counties, to make this vision become a reality. This regional emergency facility has been a long time coming and will make emergency care accessible to all the residents who have previously existed in a healthcare desert.

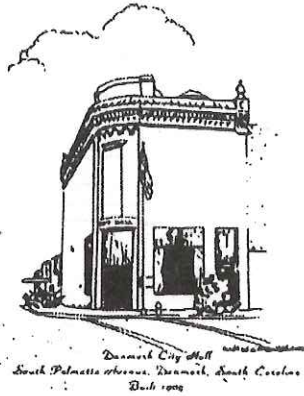
We are proud to be a part of this regional team. This project is certain to be a game-changer for a brighter economic future in the Bamberg-Barnwell communities.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles Lowell Jowers Sr.".

Charles Lowell Jowers, Sr.
Barnwell County Council

The City of Denmark



Mayor
Dr. Gerald E. Wright

Mayor Pro Tem
Jake N. Bookard

Council Members
Bervay L. Carter
Bonnie Love
Hope Long Weldon
James J. Robinson
Calvin Odom

June 21, 2018

Barrett Lawrimore Regional Cooperation Competition
SC Association of Counties
ATTN: Anna Berger & Competition Judges
PO Box 8207
Columbia, SC 29202-8207

Dear Ms. Berger and Competition Judges:

It is with great pleasure that the Denmark City Council and City Administrator support the submission of the Bamberg-Barnwell Free-standing Emergency Department for the 2018 Barrett Lawrimore Regional Cooperation Award Competition.

This vital project has been in the works for quite some time. We are proud to have worked collaboratively with our legislative delegation (Senator Brad Hutto, Senator John Matthews, Representative Lonnie Hosey, and Representative Justin Bamberg), the Regional Medical Center of Orangeburg and Calhoun Counties, the Office of Rural Health, SC DHEC, and USDA as well as the administration and councils of Barnwell, Bamberg, Orangeburg, and Calhoun counties to make this vision become a reality. This regional emergency facility has been a long time coming and will make emergency care accessible to all the residents that have previously existed in a healthcare desert.

We are proud to be a part of this regional team. We respectfully join our support to this project is certain to be a game-changer for a brighter economic future in the Bamberg-Barnwell communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Heyward Robinson
Denmark City Administrator

Gerald Wright
Mayor, City of Denmark



CALHOUN COUNTY COUNCIL

David K. Summers, Jr., Chairman
James E. Haigler, Vice Chairman
John D. Nelson
Cecil M. Thornton, Jr.
Ken Westbury

F. Lee Pickett, Jr., County Administrator
Theodore B. Felder, Assistant County Administrator
Vickie B. Stoudemire, Clerk to Council

June 22, 2018

Barrett Lawrimore Regional Cooperation Competition
South Carolina Association of Counties
ATTN: Anna Berger and Competition Judges
Post Office Box 8207
Columbia, South Carolina 29202

RE: SCAC Regional Cooperation Award

Dear Ms. Berger and Competition Judges:

It is with great pleasure that the Calhoun County Council and County Administrator support the submission of the Bamberg-Barnwell Free-standing Emergency Department for the 2018 Barrett Lawrimore Regional Cooperation Award Competition.

This vital project has been in the works for quite some time. We are proud to have worked collaboratively with our legislative delegation (Senator Brad Hutto, Senator John Matthews, Representative Lonnie Hosey, and Representative Justin Bamberg), the Regional Medical Center of Orangeburg and Calhoun Counties, the Office of Rural Health, SC DHEC, and USDA as well as the administration and councils of Barnwell, Bamberg, and Orangeburg counties to make this vision become a reality. This regional emergency facility has been a long time coming and will make emergency care accessible to all the residents that have previously existed in a healthcare desert.

We are proud to be a part of this regional team. We respectfully join our support to this project is certain to be a game-changer for a brighter economic future in the Bamberg-Barnwell communities.

Yours truly,

David K. Summers, Jr.
Council Chairman



CALHOUN COUNTY COUNCIL

David K. Summers, Jr., Chairman
James E. Haigler, Vice Chairman
John D. Nelson
Cecil M. Thornton, Jr.
Ken Westbury

F. Lee Pickett, Jr., County Administrator
Theodore B. Felder, Assistant County Administrator
Vickie B. Stoudemire, Clerk to Council

June 22, 2018

Barrett Lawrimore Regional Cooperation Competition
South Carolina Association of Counties
ATTN: Anna Berger and Competition Judges
Post Office Box 8207
Columbia, South Carolina 29202

RE: SCAC Regional Cooperation Award

Dear Ms. Berger and Competition Judges:

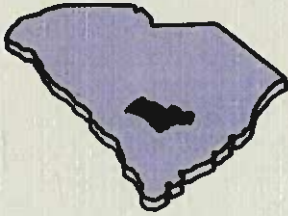
This letter is in support of the Bamberg-Barnwell Regional Free-Standing Emergency Center. Calhoun County and Orangeburg County came together in 1981 to support a regional effort to provide a hospital to serve Calhoun and Orangeburg County areas. When Calhoun County was approached about supporting a free standing emergency room to serve people in both Bamberg and Barnwell Counties, it seemed to be a natural extension of a cooperative effort to provide health care to our citizens. The need for rural health care was obvious to Calhoun County. By extending the service area of the Regional Medical Center, it provides additional income which will help control costs of health care.

Rural areas in South Carolina have to fight every day to provide services to our citizens and we see no reason that political boundaries should stop cooperation where it makes economic sense.

Yours truly,

F. Lee Prickett, Jr.
Administrator

FLP,jr/vbs



COUNTY OF ORANGEBURG

P.O. DRAWER 9000, ORANGEBURG, S.C. 29116-9000
TELEPHONE 803/533-6101
WWW.ORANGEBURGCOUNTY.ORG



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
HAROLD M. YOUNG

COUNCIL MEMBERS
JOHNNIE WRIGHT, SR., CHM.
JANIE COOPER-SMITH, VICE CHAIR
HEYWARD H. LIVINGSTON
WILLIE B. OWENS
JOHNNY RAVENELL
HARRY WIMBERLY
RAY W. SABALIS

June 20, 2018

Barrett Lawrimore Regional Cooperation Competition
SC Association of Counties
ATTN: Anna Berger & Competition Judges
PO Box 8207
Columbia, SC 29202-8207

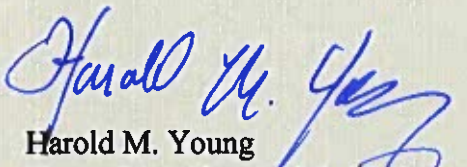
Dear Ms. Berger and Competition Judges:

It is with great pleasure that the Orangeburg County Council and County Administrator support the submission of the Bamberg-Barnwell Free-standing Emergency Department for the 2018 Barrett Lawrimore Regional Cooperation Award Competition.

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We are proud to be a part of this regional team. We respectfully join our support to this project is certain to be a game-changer for a brighter economic future in the Bamberg-Barnwell communities.

Respectfully submitted,


Harold M. Young
Orangeburg County Administrator


Johnnie Wright
Orangeburg County Council Chairman