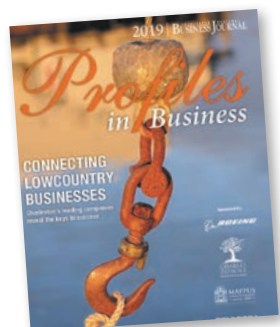


CHARLESTON REGIONAL BUSINESS JOURNAL

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Lowcountry companies

Special publication profiles regional businesses.
Inside



Multifamily boom

Appetite for apartments hasn't waned even as developments continue to rise across the region.

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Manufacturing

A look at the trends and data shaping this high-growth, advanced sector.

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Businesses adapt to restrictions on single-use plastics

By Liz Segrist
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A few months after a new ordinance limited single-use plastics in Mount Pleasant, area businesses are adjusting to the new regulations.

Grocers, pharmacies and big-box stores have replaced plastic bags with paper bags or thicker plastic versions, which the ordinance

deems an acceptable replacement.

Target now uses thicker carryout bags for merchandise and gives customers a five-cent discount for each reusable bag they bring. Walmart touts its thicker carryout bags as washable and reusable up to 125 times. Both versions are still made of plastic, however. Both CVS and Publix in Mount Pleasant now use paper bags.

Restaurants also have exchanged their plas-

tic takeout containers for cardboard, or are using plastic options made from compostable materials, for example. On restaurant counters, paper straws have replaced plastic.

Jennifer Ferrebee, who co-owns the salad chain Verde with her husband, Sam, said they have used eco-friendly products since opening in 2011. While the new regulations do

See PLASTICS, Page 8 ►



Jeongeun Lee6 won the U.S. Women's Open at the Country Club of Charleston. Organizers said the multiday event brought millions in income and exposure to the Charleston region and South Carolina.

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Photos/Kim McManus

'I've been incredibly blessed'

Burdette reflects on 30-plus years of working in Mount Pleasant

By Patrick Hoff
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Mac Burdette is of the opinion that when you get to a fork in the road, you should take it.

"Life just, it leads you in all sorts of directions, and you never know if you're taking the right road or not," he said. "Usually you like to think you are, and I think being resilient, being prepared in a different direction is all part of getting lucky and being successful."

That philosophy led Burdette to a decades-long career of public service, capped by nine years as executive director of Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum. Prior to that, Burdette served as a colonel in the Army Reserve and spent 25 years as Mount Pleasant town administrator.

Burdette plans to retire from Patriots Point later this month.

"If the world was full of bureaucrats like

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CHARLESTON UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Who is building what in the Charleston area?
Projects, companies, prices, projected timelines, photos and stories.

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Mac Burdette, this world would certainly be more evenly run, I can tell you that," former Mount Pleasant Mayor Billy Swails said.

Swails pointed to some of the people Burdette hired during his 25-year tenure, including some who are still with the town — like Eric DeMoura, who succeeded Burdette as town administrator.

"Mac had a well-oiled machine," Swails said. "It was just simple as that."

Burdette joined the town in 1986 when Mount Pleasant's population was just under 20,000; by the time he moved to Patriots Point in 2010, the population had more than tripled. Today, Mount Pleasant has 89,338 residents, the U.S. Census Bureau reports.

"I've been incredibly blessed and lucky to have had the careers that I've had, military as well as civilian," Burdette said. "There's no rhyme or reason for it. I made my share of mistakes along the way, and I had a lot of people to prop me up ... and support me."

Coming to Mount Pleasant

When Burdette graduated from Clemson University, he first worked in a regional planning position near Brunswick, Ga.

After that, Burdette moved on to the S.C. Coastal Council — now the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management in the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control — until he got a call from Dennis Harmon.

Harmon, who served as city administrator for Goose Creek for 38 years, recommended that Burdette apply for the town administrator job in Mount Pleasant.

Burdette called the Mount Pleasant mayor at the time and said he'd be excited for the opportunity.

"There was no plan," Burdette said. "I didn't sit down one day and scope out my life."

Burdette later found out that the town administrator job had been open because Harmon had turned it down first.

"I never let Dennis forget that," he said. "It was good enough for me, but it wasn't good enough for him."

Swails was a councilman just prior to Burdette's being hired as town administrator; he later served as mayor during Burdette's final years with the town.

"He's one of the best team players I've ever met," Swails said.

Swails said also that Burdette is a hard worker. Swails, the former mayor, said he is an early bird, and for his first few days as mayor, Swails would beat Burdette to work.

"And then for the next year and a half, I never beat him again," Swails said. "He was always there before I was. I mean that's the kind of person he is. He's not a workaholic ... but he's real close."

DeMoura said his first impression of Burdette was that he was a very



Mac Burdette is retiring as executive director of Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum at the end of the month. People who have worked with Burdette throughout his career say his leadership helped make Mount Pleasant and South Carolina a better place. (Photo/Kim McManus)

decisive person.

"Quick thinker," DeMoura said. "I mean, he can size up an issue in no time."

DeMoura said Burdette set a high bar for town staff during his time as administrator, a bar that DeMoura has tried to uphold.

"The expectation was that we were going to provide a high level of service," DeMoura said. "Not always perfect, but a high level of service, and that is really powerful, and that was the standard all the time."

Some of Burdette's biggest impacts on the town, according to DeMoura, were to begin Mount Pleasant's road-building efforts and to push for the creation of a Design Review Board.

"It wasn't about him," DeMoura said. "It was about service and being better tomorrow than we are today."

As dedicated as Burdette was, though, DeMoura said his former boss always took the time to ask how people were doing.

"I know how one's time is tough to find, because we're constantly busy all the time," DeMoura said. "But yet with Mac, it was 'Come sit down, let's talk about your family for a while,' Clemson football or whatever it was. He was genuinely interested and genuinely cared."

Swails said that when the town's budget tightened during the Great Recession, Burdette was an asset to keeping Mount Pleasant afloat.

"We had some times when, you know, we didn't have a lot of money," Swails said. "And we budgeted well and we did good. And Mac's leadership certainly helped us

get through that."

Swails said he was sad to see Burdette leave the town in 2010, but the transition was smooth because Burdette had hired DeMoura as his deputy town administrator in hopes that Town Council would hire DeMoura as his replacement.

"It was easy because Mac had set it in motion," Swails said.

DeMoura, a Clemson graduate just like Burdette, said Burdette has been a mentor for him since he began his career.

"Whatever good things that I'm able to achieve certainly has his fingerprints on it," he said.

Moving onto the Yorktown

As Burdette prepared to retire from Mount Pleasant in 2009, he approached Swails about wanting to continue working for a few more years, potentially as executive director at Patriots Point. Burdette asked Swails, who served as an ex-officio member of the Patriots Point Development Authority Board, to help make some introductions.

"That was a slam dunk for the board when they hired Mac over there," Swails said. "And since then ... what can you say negative about the Patriots Point authority since Mac has taken over? Absolutely nothing."

When Burdette arrived at Patriots Point, the museum wasn't in good shape, DeMoura said.

"He goes over to Patriots Point and inherits a situation where I believe they're operating in the red," he said. "And they had no answer for their long-term capital problems or challenges, which was, you

know, how to maintain the Yorktown."

Nine years later, Burdette has set the expectation that Patriots Point will break even every year, and the museum has seen a steady increase in attendance almost every year.

Burdette said his time at Patriots Point was the most enjoyable of his career — as well as the most difficult.

"We are expected to be self-sufficient financially," Burdette said. "If you talk to the average Joe Schmoe out there, Joe says the state ought to pay for this place. And you know, yeah, right. You say that until your tax bill."

Burdette said running Patriots Point shouldn't be easy, though, because of the importance of the museum's mission.

"Where do families take their children and their grandchildren to connect to the past, where all these men and women sacrificed sometimes everything so that we could all pretty much live in a relatively peaceful coexistence in a strange, crazy, dangerous world?" he said. "I would subscribe it's going to be places like Patriots Point that continue on."

Self-sufficiency, he said, means partnerships with people like Michael Bennett, who has an agreement with Patriots Point to develop approximately 60 acres of land and create a steady source of income for the museum and the maintenance of its ships and planes.

"One of the things that we felt like we had to do is get one developer who developed the whole chunk," Burdette said. "Because if let's say you split it into 10 acre

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pieces or five acre pieces, then we would have had to build the infrastructure.”

The first phase of development, a \$350 million, 30-acre project called Patriots Annex, will include restaurants, shops, office buildings, an amphitheater and a hotel. Patriots Point is expected to receive \$4.3 million in annual revenue from the development.

The Patriots Point Development Authority board approved Bennett's conceptual plans in March. The next step, Burdette said, is gaining approval from Mount Pleasant and assigning a company to manage construction.

Ray Chandler, chairman of the Patriots Point Development Authority board of directors, said Burdette “is one of the most gifted men I’ve ever met.”

“He has given Patriots Point all of his immense energy and talent,” he said in a statement. “We have been the beneficiaries of his unparalleled experience in business and government.”

Mount Pleasant Mayor Will Haynie said the best thing about Burdette is his understanding of the partnership between the town and Patriots Point.

“Everything we do, from all the public services, all the police and fire and secu-

rity and for every event over there, Mac really grasps that because all those people used to work for him,” he said. “And I am forever grateful for the working relationship that I had with him on all of those matters.”

Burdette said as enjoyable as his time has been at Patriots Point, he knows the importance of knowing when to step aside, especially as he approaches 70 years old.

“I’m tired,” he said. “I don’t know that I’m as quite as creative and as sharp as I was five years ago, four years ago, maybe even two years ago. I don’t know that I’ve got the stamina I did a couple years ago.”

A lasting legacy

DeMoura said very few people have as positive an impact on Mount Pleasant as Burdette.

“He became the consistent, reliable face of the town throughout the growth of the community, a real growth spurt of the community,” DeMoura said.

Burdette said some of the most important decisions he helped make were those that seemed small but had a big impact, such as the decision to initially have only one high school in Mount Pleasant and the prioritization of the recreation department.

“That, in essence, is the reason that people want to live in Mount Pleasant,”

Burdette said. “It’s not just that it’s on the coast, and it’s a beautiful place and all that.”

Swails credits Burdette with the state of Mount Pleasant’s recreation, fire and police departments even today, almost a decade after he left the town’s employment.

“I feel safe every day in Mount Pleasant,” Swails said. “It’s as simple as that, because Mac Burdette made a strong police department, a strong fire department, public works. And I credit all that to Mac.”

Swails said Mount Pleasant was very lucky to have Burdette’s work ethic on its side.

“He’s just one of those guys who grabs it, he growls and he gets it done. It’s as simple as that,” Swails said. “I mean, if Mac had gone into business when he went into town administrator ... Mac would own Mount Pleasant right now, I can tell you that, because he’s a smart businessman.”

One of the biggest and best decisions made during his time as town administrator, Burdette said, was Town Council’s decision to impose a development impact fee.

“Development impact fees, which are very fair, make sure that you’re not going to see significant regular tax increases because of growth and development in


the community,” he said. “It puts the burden directly onto the back of the developer. Yes, you’re going to come here, you want to make money, that’s terrific. That’s part of what we are too. But you’ve got to pay your fair share.”

Burdette said he’s thought a lot about the advice he’s going to give Larry Murray, who was selected last month to succeed Burdette as Patriots Point’s executive director.

The most important pieces of advice, Burdette said, are to fight hard for resources; spend time in Columbia, because as a state agency Patriots Point regularly needs the approval of legislators; get to know the town of Mount Pleasant; and take care of the museum’s volunteers and staff.

“You don’t need to be an expert in all these things,” Burdette said. “You’ve got to be an expert in management and knowing how to work with people to get them to do what you need them to do.”

DeMoura said Burdette “has, without question, a legacy of success” across Mount Pleasant and South Carolina.

“Each one of us is better for it and better because Mac Burdette stayed in public service for his career,” DeMoura said. 

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Business Digest

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equipped with its own exhaust system to safely house firetrucks. The fire station will service residents and businesses in a radius of fewer than 50 miles. Mashburn was awarded the contract in the fall and has been working with the fire department and county staff as they secured a \$3 million grant from the Department of Agriculture. McMillan Pazdan Smith is the architect on the project and Thomas & Hutton is providing civil engineering services.

**Brighton Swim Academy opens in Mount Pleasant**

Brighton Swim Academy has opened at 3407 Salterbeck St. in Park West in Mount Pleasant. The academy in north Mount Pleasant is dedicated to teaching people of all ages to swim. Owners Lance

**MUSC Health opens office on Daniel Island**

MUSC Health has opened a location in Suite 101 at 864 Island Park Drive on Daniel Island. Services offered at the facility include disease prevention, wellness and acupuncture. Hours for the new health center are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

and Carlie Ogren are lifelong swimmers and longtime instructors. Carlie Ogren is a U.S. Masters Certified Level 2 Coach. Lance Ogren is a Swim Smooth certified coach, a U.S. Masters Certified Level 4 Coach and is the head coach of the Palmetto Masters Swim Team in Mount Pleasant. Brighton Swim Academy is equipped with a UV filtration system that kills bacteria with UV light, cutting chlorine use in half. The pool water and air temperature are kept at 90 degrees — significantly warmer than a multiuse

pool, to help students practice putting their head underwater and mastering the strokes.

Trident Medical Center, MUSC awarded A grade from Leapfrog

Trident Medical Center and the Medical University of South Carolina were awarded an A grade from The Leapfrog Group’s Spring 2019 Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade. The Leapfrog Group is a national nonprofit organization that works to improve health care quality and safety

for consumers and purchasers. The safety grade assigns a letter grade to hospitals across the country based on their performance in preventing medical errors, injuries, accidents, infection and other harms to patients in their care.

**Fundraising event raises record amount for Make-A-Wish S.C.**

The third annual Wishes in Bloom garden party raised more than \$170,000 for Make-A-Wish South Carolina. That amount will fund about 22.5 wishes to children in South Carolina battling critical illness. The event, hosted by Magnolia Plantation and Gardens, included a live auction, cocktail hour, live music and food prepared by local chefs. Wish kid Joey Benton welcomed guests and spoke about his wish from 2011 and how it continues to serve as a catalyst for his wellness.