



# ANNUAL REPORT

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2024

A photograph of a coastal scene. In the foreground, there are two wooden Adirondack chairs and a small table on a wooden deck. An American flag is flying on a pole to the right. The background shows the ocean and a blue sky with clouds. A large yellow diagonal stripe runs across the image from the bottom left to the top right.

TOWN OF EDISTO BEACH





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# ABOUT US

Edisto Beach is one of the few remaining family-oriented, gently developed beaches on the eastern coastline of South Carolina. Located in Colleton County where the Edisto River, one of the longest free-flowing blackwater rivers in North America, completes its 206-mile journey to the Atlantic Ocean.

Today, low-lying houses are situated along 4.5 miles of this uncrowded, pristine beach. With a laid-back lifestyle and a quiet, yet breath-taking, natural setting, this sea island destination offers everyone a chance to enjoy the slower pace of days gone by.

Whether you tap into the vast array of activities and recreational outings that abound, or just take the time to soak in the area's unrivaled sunsets, Edisto Beach is revered by individuals and families, beach and nature lovers, and golfers and boaters alike who seek to escape the hustle of everyday life.

So come see for yourself and get to know Edisto Beach...a family sanctuary. You might just discover a new place to call home.



# **TOWN OF EDISTO BEACH**

**ESTABLISHED: 1970**

**COORDINATES:**

**32°29'15"N 80°19'28"W**

**POPULATION: 1033**

**SQUARE MILES: ~2.5**

**BEACH ACCESSES: 38**



# MESSAGE FROM OUR MAYOR

As the Mayor of the Town of Edisto Beach, I am proud of the dedication and commitment of our Town Council, Administrator, department heads, staff, committee members, and the entire community. This Annual Report will feature our 2024 accomplishments.

In November 2023, Councilmembers Jerome Kizer and Joey Bagwell were re-elected, and I was re-elected as Mayor. Along with Councilmembers Bob Renner and Jay Watts, we continue to work very hard to protect our beach, serve our residents, and provide needed services.

We are working diligently on accomplishing the tasks involved with the Project Partnership Agreement the Town signed with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in February 2023, which provides a much-needed \$30 million renourishment for our beach. This project is critical to protecting private property and our pristine public beach. Construction is expected to begin in Winter 2025, with completion slated for May 2026.



We are also very excited about another large project, the \$10 million new Emergency Operations Center/Town Hall complex, which is funded by the Colleton County Penny Sales Tax. This complex will provide much-needed space for our emergency needs and for office and conference space. We anticipate the groundbreaking for this project to be in early Spring 2025.

The Town is financially stable, which enables us to continue to place funds into beach renourishment and infrastructure needs.

We strive to make Edisto Beach a great vacation place for our many visitors but, most importantly, we want Edisto Beach to be a great local community and a wonderful place to live for our residents. Our focus always is to do what's in the best interests of our residents and of our precious beach environment.

Working together, we will continue to make our beautiful beach town the absolute best it can be.

**W. CRAWFORD MOORE, JR.**





# EDISTO BEACH TOWN COUNCIL



## **Crawford Moore, Mayor**

*Current Term: November 2023 to November 2027*

## **Jerome Kizer, Mayor Pro Tempore**

*Current Term: November 2023 to November 2027*

## **Bob Renner, Council Member**

*Current Term: November 2021 to November 2025*

## **Jay Watts, Council Member**

*Current Term: November 2021 to November 2025*

## **Joey Bagwell, Council Member**

*Current Term: November 2023 to November 2027*



# PARTNERSHIPS WITH FEDERAL, STATE, AND COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES

The Mayor and Town Council are proud of the relationship-building efforts with our federal and state representatives, Colleton County Council, and administrators. The Mayor and Town Council frequently discuss Town needs and projects with our representatives. These important partnerships have led to the Town's success in receiving the following funding:

Automated Meter Readers - \$1,000,000/SC Legislative Earmark  
Beach Nourishment - \$7,500,000/SC Legislative Earmark  
Burley L. Lyons Park Boardwalk – \$38,632/SC PARD  
Bay Creek Park Dock – \$253,800 Colleton County Legislative Delegation/SC DNR  
SCDOT TAP Grant for Bike Paths - \$175,000 Colleton County Transportation  
SCIIP Grant - \$8,904,385/SC Legislature  
Colleton County Capital Project Sales Tax Commission - \$10,000,000

**We thank the following federal, state, and county representatives for assisting the Town of Edisto Beach in securing much-needed funds:**

Senator Lindsey Graham  
Senator Tim Scott  
Representative Nancy Mace

Colleton County Legislative Delegation  
Senator George “Chip” Campsen  
Senator Brad Hutto  
Senator Matt Leber  
Senator Margie Bright Matthews  
Representative Justin Bamberg  
Representative Bill Hager  
Representative Michael Rivers  
Representative Robby Robbins, Delegation Chair  
Representative James Teeple  
Sue Keith, Director

Colleton County Council and Administration  
Scott Biering, Chairman  
Johnny Frank  
Steven D. Murdaugh  
Bubba Trippe  
Phillip M. Taylor, Sr.  
Meagan Utsey, County Administrator

# MESSAGE FROM OUR TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

The administration, department heads, and staff at Town Hall are proud to serve the residents of our beautiful beach town. The positivity that accompanies working with our engaged residents, dedicated Town Council members, and staff makes working on Edisto Beach a truly rewarding experience.

Town Hall has five departments serving our residents: Administration, Fire, Police, Building, and Utilities/Public Works. As we work to use the Town's resources to the best of our ability in order to keep our beach healthy, provide infrastructure and needed services, and keep Edisto....Edisto, please know that we here at Town Hall take our responsibilities seriously. As Town Council annually sets their goals and the budget, we work to carry out the administrative and operational tasks necessary to achieve these goals.

Whether our residents have an issue or problem, wish to share an idea, or just want to come by and say "hello," we are available to talk with you. Please feel free to reach out to me or our department heads and staff as needed.

**MARK D. AAKHUS**



# MAJOR TOWN PROJECTS

As noted in the following pages, the Town has a number of projects – both completed and ongoing – we have been working on, but there are three major projects that we’ve been focusing on which will preserve our beach and improve our infrastructure: the Edisto Beach Coastal Storm Risk Management Project with the US Army Corps of Engineers; the Emergency Operations Center/Town Hall Project; and the Wastewater Improvement Project. These projects are explained in more detail below.

## **Edisto Beach Coastal Storm Risk Management Project with the US Army Corps of Engineers**



We continue our work with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) on this important project, which will reduce the risk of damage to life and structures landward of the dunes. Sharing the cost of beach nourishment with the federal government, eligibility for 100% federally funded repairs after declared disasters, and an attractive and usable beach are added benefits of this project. The total construction cost is \$31 million, with the federal cost at \$20 million and the Town cost of \$10 million. The Town has received \$7.5 million from the South Carolina Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Department for this project, and the Town will receive approximately \$5 million in-kind credit for previous work completed. We are on target to begin construction in Winter 2025/Early Spring 2026, with project completion by May 2026. The easement and construction line map has been established, and easements will be discussed with beachfront owners in the near future.

## **Wastewater Improvement Project**

In 2023, the Town received \$8,904,385 in funds through the South Carolina Infrastructure Investment Program and \$500,000 from the Rural Infrastructure Authority to be used toward wastewater system upgrades within the Town. In April 2021, the Town imposed a moratorium on connecting to the sewer system due to the over-extension of the distribution system. Capacity issues at the collection facilities, and much needed updating is now being addressed. American Engineering Consultants, Inc., developed the scope of work needed to address these issues and the project budget. The total cost of all recommended improvements was requested and awarded in grant funding.

Also, upgrades to Pump Stations A & B were also undertaken during the 2023-2024 fiscal year, with larger pumps to be installed, along with new variable frequency drives and controls at both pump stations. Pump Station B construction was completed in June 2023, and the pump is fully operational. Pump Station A construction was completed in September 2024.

As a reminder, these improvements will not expand the Town’s sewer system. Instead, they will improve the existing infrastructure to properly accommodate the existing and allocated capacity. Because of this, it is critical that homeowners who are not connected to the sewer system ensure their septic tanks are being properly maintained.



# MAJOR TOWN PROJECTS CONTINUED

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## New Emergency Operations Center/Town Hall

This \$10 million project, which is being paid from the Colleton County Capital Project Sales Tax, is scheduled to begin construction in early 2025, with a 12 to 14-month construction period. Over the past year, we have been working with the architect on the facility's design and working to obtain the required permits. One of the facility's major functions includes an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) which will house emergency personnel and Town staff before, during, and after emergency events. This plan will allow for a quicker, more efficient response and recovery for the Town. The new Town Hall is designed with extra space for Council Chambers, and more privacy areas for residents to discuss their needs with Town Hall staff. Once the new facility is built, the Police Department will move into the current Town Hall building, and the Fire Department will extend its space into the current Police Department area.



Rendering of the front of the proposed Edisto Beach EOC/Town Hall

## ADDITIONAL TOWN PROJECTS

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**As with our three major projects, the Town has worked diligently on several other projects in order to improve infrastructure and enhance amenities for our residents and visitors. In 2023-2024, we worked on several major projects including:**

### **Jungle Road Park Bathroom & Trailhead Project**

As a convenience for our locals and visitors, construction began on this facility in Spring 2024 and is near completion. Restroom facilities, water stations for humans and pets, a bike repair area, and a Town-wide trail map kiosk are featured. This project was funded through a South Carolina Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Grant. Once the Town's sewer moratorium is lifted, the facility will open for use.

### **Tennis & Pickleball Resurfacing and Restriping**

With funding in the amount of \$25,000 recommended by the ATAX Board, and approved by Town Council, the tennis and pickleball resurfacing and restriping project was completed in December 2023. The pickleball courts have certainly been popular with residents and visitors alike. Town Hall has two pickleball sets available free of charge on a first-come, first-served basis.

### **Jenkins Street Repaving**

Jenkins Street from Palmetto Boulevard to Myrtle Street was repaved with funds from the Capital Improvement Projects Fund. Jenkins Street from Myrtle Street to the Ocean Ridge gated entrance was repaved the year prior.

### **Arc/Billow Drainage Improvements**

In 2021, Town Council approved to move forward with engineered drainage improvements, and funds were requested and received from the American Rescue Plan Act. In December 2022, Town Council approved the bid for this work in the amount of \$266,391 and \$38,185 for design, for a total of \$304,576. Work commenced in Spring 2023, and the project was completed in January 2024.

### **Interior Lagoon Study**

Town Council commissioned Davis & Floyd to conduct an Interior Lagoon Study in order to identify potential solutions for addressing both rainfall and tidal flooding. Davis & Floyd began their work in Fall 2023. In January 2024, an update was shared with Town Council and the public, and a follow-up informational session will be scheduled later this year with residents. This study is funded by the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant.

### **Bay Creek Park Dock Repairs**

Seeing the need for repairs to the Bay Creek Park Dock, Town Council approved this project in 2023. The Town applied for and received \$253,799 in funding through the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. The total project cost is \$270,949.50. A popular spot for many, the repairs are expected to be finalized in late Fall 2024.

### **Two Bike Path Improvement Grant Submissions**

Two bike path improvement projects were submitted to granting agencies. A grant proposal was submitted to South Carolina DOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program (TAP) for Lybrand Street, Docksite Road, Yacht Club Road, Edisto Street, and Lee Street Bike Paths in the amount of \$900,000 and approved by SC DOT. Also, a grant proposal for repairs and resurfacing to the Jungle Shores Bike Path was submitted to the Land and Water Conservation Fund in the amount of \$290,000, and this project was approved by the National Park Service.

### **Ordinance 2024-01 to Amend Section 58-161 of Article VI – Noise**

Following input from residents, Town Council approved to amend Section 58-161 of the Town's Code of Ordinances to permit outdoor entertainment between the first day of March and the thirty-first day of October each year, which extended the previous period for outdoor entertainment.

### **Digital Budget Book**

The Town is proud to offer interested readers our Digital Budget Book, a user-friendly transparency tool that covers all aspects of the Town's annual and historical budgets.



# COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELFARE

The safety and welfare of our residents is a primary focus for the Town, and we offered the following as a way to focus on the importance of being prepared and safe.

## **Fire Safe Community Award Recognition and Training**

There are 500 fire departments across South Carolina, and the Edisto Beach Fire Department was one of only 154 fire departments to receive the “Fire Safe South Carolina” designation. Fire Safe South Carolina is a community risk reduction program and provides this designation to fire departments that continually work to reduce fires and related injuries in South Carolina, which results in decreased risks for residents and firefighters. To receive the designation, fire departments must complete courses to improve data quality, must train community partners to deliver in-home safety visits, and must further develop their skills through online National Fire Academy courses in risk reduction and assessment.

## **Hurricane Tabletop Exercises with Colleton County Emergency Management Department**

In an effort to ensure the Town is ready for the hurricane season, tabletop exercises are held annually with Colleton County Emergency Management Department. During the exercise held on May 29, 2024, various emergency scenarios, information, and needs assessment are all covered in this exercise. Following this exercise, Town officials then hold an informational session on hurricane preparedness with residents.





## Hurricane Preparedness Workshop

On June 7, 2024, Town officials held the 3rd Annual Hurricane Preparedness Workshop for residents. This workshop provides important information to residents, such as preparing homes for hurricane season, evacuation routes, emergency requests, etc.

## AirMedCare Network Municipal Site Membership Agreement for Town Residents

For the past few years, Town Council has approved membership agreements with AirMedCare. This agreement provides free helicopter transport for medical necessities by an AirMedCare provider for all individuals who reside within the boundaries of the Town and for transport from a pickup location in Colleton or Charleston counties.

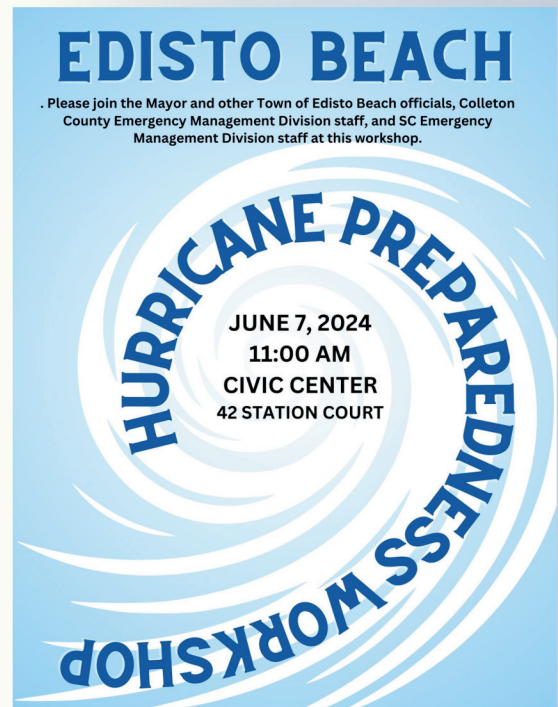
## Camera Registration Program

The Town and the Police Department partner with residents and businesses to create a safe community through the use of surveillance cameras. Early access to surveillance footage can reduce investigation time and increase the likelihood of recovering property. This program provides reliable information on the location of cameras throughout the Town to aid in investigations and public safety issues. Many residents, homeowners, and businesses have joined us in this program.



## Beach Wheelchair Program

The Edisto Beach Fire Department provides beach wheelchairs on loan free-of-charge. The majority of the beach wheelchairs have been funded with ATAX funds and donations. During Summer 2023, beach wheelchairs were checked out approximately 200 times.



# FACTS & FIGURES

FINANCIAL INFORMATION  
FY ENDING JUNE 30, 2024

(AUDITED BALANCES)

GENERAL FUND		
	Budgeted	Actual
Revenue	\$7,645,113	\$8,598,330
Expenditures	\$7,645,113	\$7,034,256
WATER FUND		
	Budgeted	Actual
Revenue	\$1,921,484	\$1,884,513
Expenditures	\$1,921,484	\$1,590,070
WASTEWATER FUND		
	Budgeted	Actual
Revenue	\$708,177	\$755,342
Expenditures	\$708,177	\$607,521



# 2024 APPROVED ATAX FUNDS

## Approved ATAX funds as follows for various projects:

- \$3,960 for Edisto Art Guild Annual Plein Air Paint Out
- \$15,000 for Town of Edisto Beach Cookin' on the Creek BBQ Festival
- \$3,200 Art Guild Summer Series - Arts in the Park
- \$6,800 Town of Edisto Beach July 4<sup>th</sup> Family Fun and Fireworks
- \$7,263 Edisto Beach Police Department Zodiac Boat Motor and Trailer
- \$36,543 Town of Edisto Beach Public Access Signage
- \$50,000 for the Bell Property Annual Debt Bond



# 2023-2024 FACTS

## Edisto Beach Fire Department

- Fire-related Calls: 21
- Medical: 273
- EMS/Misc emergency responses: 165
- Public Service (fire inspections, beach wheelchair loans, etc.): 465

## Edisto Beach Police Department

- Miles Patrolled: 135,458
- Property Checks: 16,949
- Officer-Initiated Responses: 961
- Calls for Service/Incident Reports: 2,421
- Parking Tickets Issued: 866
- Arrests: 30

## Utilities – Water & Services

- Water Discharged: 183,975,370 gallons
- Wastewater Treated: 52,257,257 gallons
- Water Leaks: 44
- Sewer Leaks: 2
- Tap Installments: 35
- Street Sign Installations: 193
- Trash Can Orders: 495
- Other Work Orders: 603

## Building Department

- Building permits issued: 526
- New construction building permits issued: 25
- Building inspections conducted: 1,211
- Certificates of Occupancy issued: 19
- Business Licenses issued: 1,542 (747 business/795 short-term rentals)

## Municipal Court

In the 2023-24 fiscal year, approximately 1,096 violations were filed. Of this number, 362 cases were heard before the Municipal Court Judge.

## Traffic Numbers for Edisto Beach

As we all know, the Town gets more and more visitors each year. As per our Police Department traffic information, the following are the number of vehicles which entered our Town limits for major holidays in the 2023-2024 fiscal year:

- 4th of July 2023: 24,327 vehicles
- Labor Day 2023: 23,393 vehicles
- Memorial Day 2024: 27,637 vehicles

## Website Traffic Statistics

- Active Users: 76,000
- Page Views: 447,000

## Most Viewed Webpages:

- Visitors: 17,000 views
- Beach Access and Parking: 14,000 views
- Parks and Market: 11,000 views
- Beach Regulations: 10,000 views
- News: 8,900 views



# TOWN OF EDISTO EVENTS

Here is a showcase of the events that our team organizes and proudly leads, bringing our community together throughout the year. While these are the events we directly manage, our involvement extends beyond this list. The Town is also a vital partner in numerous other events by providing support and volunteers. Together, these efforts ensure a vibrant and connected community for all to enjoy!



Our seasonal Wednesday market features local and regional artists, farmers and craftsmen.



An annual shopping extravaganza with music & food



The Sunday after Thanksgiving, the community welcomes in the Christmas season with song!



## TRICK OR TREAT ON THE CREEK



An evening where the local businesses, residents and visitors come together for games, trick or treating and a hot dog dinner.



An annual SC BBQ Association sanctioned event held the second weekend of October.



