Dear Citizens of Surfside Beach:

Best wishes to each and every one of you in the New Year 1997! Hopefully, your Holidays were Happy and Blessed.

Let us hope that 1997 will also be a good year for the Town of Surfside Beach. 1996 was a year that saw the fulfillment of a long time vision of Council, construction of a new Police Facility, as well as the new, well-equipped Public Works building, among other things.

Council and I look forward to more prosperity for the Town in FY 1997/98, including enhanced beautification of Ocean Boulevard. The completion of the concrete walkway along that corridor is part of the project: A $615,000 Beach Renourishment Project, and remodeling of the old Police Station into a permanent EOC (Emergency Operations Center). The EOC is the "heart" of the Town...which must keep "beating" during emergency situations.

Everything to keep the Town up and running is located in Town Hall; therefore, computer and phone lines will be relocated to this secure area. A structural survey of the Town Hall building was conducted, and it was found that the roof needs modification to ensure that it will withstand hurricane force winds. The EOC will automatically set up operations from that area as soon as an "emergency" is declared. Staff will carefully monitor the situation from the EOC throughout the event. Weather bulletins will be available on the new "Weather Information Service" in a much more timely basis. Previously, it took 30/60 minutes to receive updates. Council approved the Program at its Annual Budget Retreat.

Further emergency preparedness will be accomplished by the installation of storm panels for windows and glass doors at all Town-owned facilities. With the advent of more active hurricane seasons, Town operations must be continuous and timely, in order to keep the citizens of Surfside Beach safe and well-informed.

With the installation of parking meters at beach access parking lots throughout Town in the Spring, new and improved parking areas will continue to be a Council priority. Also, the recently enacted 1% Hospitality Fee will make it possible to enhance tourism-related services/facilities.

It is our hope that what we do to make this Town a better place to live and work will meet with your approval. We invite you to attend Council Meetings and to watch and listen to "your" government in progress.

Sincerely,

Dick M. Johnson, Mayor

PUBLIC WORKS

Tropical Storm Josephine sneaked into Town in October and rained on our "parade". The 5 plus inches of rain that fell between 3 A.M. and 7 A.M. the morning of October 7th is an amount usually associated with full fledged hurricanes and was more than we received from Hurricanes Bertha, Fran and Hugo combined. Additionally, the high tide that day was at 5 A.M. complicating the drainage situation even further. Although most everyone will get their feet wet under these circumstances, the waters had mostly subsided by 10 A.M., with minimal damage reported.

The Street Department has been busy with Fall maintenance, activities, and recently completed "sprucing up" the landscaping on Surfside Drive, U.S. 17 Business, the "Welcome Sign" areas, the Public Works Complex on Sandy Lane, and the new Police Building. A Street Department crew was able to rescue the plants from the old welcome sign at the U.S. 544 intersection, before the S.C.D.O.T. contractor began working on the necessary improvements, using those plants at the New Public Works Building and the Police Station. The donation of a Leyland Cypress, now at the corner of Pine and Poplar Streets completed the landscaping of these two new buildings without spending a dime on buying plants. Special thanks to the "donors" and thanks also to the Recreation Department for the layout and assistance at the Police Building.

The Sanitation Department was tickled when the new Knuckleboom Loader Dump truck came in November, to relieve the 10-year-old model still in service. This addition should relieve the seasonal backlogs that result during Spring and Fall yard cleaning, and after storms. Also, please remember, for collection of non-garbage wastes other than bagged leaves, please call 238-2590 by Wednesday to be placed on the Special Collection list.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

I was once asked, "If it ever got too cold for a thief?" I replied; "It does not make any difference to a thief if its warm weather or cold weather, they go about their business until they are caught!" For example, since Oct. 1995 until Oct. 1996 the Town has had 57 homes and 15 businesses burglarized. Of the 57 homes broken into, a total of 36 of these burglaries have been cleared, either administratively or by arrest. Of the 15 businesses that were burglarized, 7 were closed either administratively or by arrest.
Generally, when a burglary is closed administratively it is because there is insufficient evidence to take the case to court. Several of the 57 homes that were burglarized had nothing taken and except for the damage at the point of entry, nothing was destroyed or missing. These were believed to have been entered by vagrants.

With some Town homeowners not living on site, it is very difficult to obtain information on a burglary until the homeowner returns and finds his home broken into and items missing. Because of rental properties, this may not happen for several months. It often happens that the homeowner did not copy down the serial numbers of the property that was stolen. Without serial numbers or other identifying marks on property it is extremely difficult to get a conviction in a court of law. However, all burglaries are assigned and investigated.

The Department has noticed an increase in drug activity recently, 25 drug arrest have been made in the past few months. Heroin and acid seem to be readily available to local juveniles. For those people that have information on crime in Surfside Beach or Horry County for that matter, "CRIME STOPPERS" has money available, up to $5,000, and you don’t have to give your name!

Chris Hall of Cellular One in Surfside Beach donated two cell phones to the police department, one phone is carried by the day work officer and one by the night work officer. When a citizen calls in a complaint, the dispatcher can now advise the citizen to contact the officer who is coming to the citizens aid directly by giving the citizen the cellular telephone number of the road officer. This works particularly well when a citizen has a suspicious person complaint. Often prior to the officers arrival at the scene the suspicious person has gone or is hiding and precious time is lost. Now the complaint can direct the officer to the exact location without losing sight of the suspicious person. This has worked well in other areas of the country where community policing is practiced.

Christmas, "Oh that wonderful time of the year." All the presents are in one place under the Christmas Tree! All the good citizens are out and about having a jolly time. I hope they are not thinking about me. "Who am I?", you ask? I'm a thief, I'll be the Grinch who will steal your Christmas, but please forget about me. Don't lock your doors, don't leave your car parked and don't tell your "Crime Watch" where you will be. I'll be waiting to fill my sack! But please Dear Santa tell everyone to forget about me!

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

During the month of October, staff members met with federal and state officials to seek reimbursement for expenditures resulting from Hurricane Fran. The Town received a $21,352 grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for expenditures related to emergency preparedness, debris removal, and for the use of Town equipment to remove debris.

The Town held its Annual Budget Retreat in October at Wampole Plantation in Pinopolis, S.C. Council and staff members met to plan and discuss programs and projects that will impact the upcoming 1997-98 fiscal year. At the Budget Retreat priorities were established to assist staff in preparing the 1997-98 budget. A proposed budget will be presented to Council in mid-January. A Public Hearing on the Budget will be held in February and the adoption of the Budget will be in March.

The 1% Hospitality Fee became effective on September 1st with the first return due on October 20th. This fee applies to transient accommodations, paid admissions, restaurants and other food facilities, and prepared and modified foods sold by grocery and convenience stores. If you have a business which is subject to this Fee and you are closed any month during the year, please remit a return for that month reporting no receipts. If you have any questions about when to file your Hospitality Fee return, please call 238-2590, ext. 306.

AROUND THE FIRE HOUSE

Every year the Fire Department sponsors a Food, Toy and Clothing Drive over the holidays. This year was no exception. As usual, this year was a success. We wish to take this opportunity to thank all who donated to the Drive. Because of your generosity, many people, young and old, were provided with needed items which they otherwise would not have had this Christmas.

Well, it's Winter again. Although the weather, as a rule, doesn't get as cold here as it may have "back home", it still gets cold enough to cause damage if you're not prepared. For those of you who live in condos with fire sprinkler and/or standpipe systems, if you have not already done so, you need to contact a sprinkler contractor and have him insure that your systems are properly winterized. If the system is frozen, then it's not providing the protection from fire that you paid for. Secondly, when it thaws out, it will probably cause at least, a big mess and at worst, major property damage from water leakage.

With rising heating costs, everyone wants to find alternative heating methods, I don't blame them, but with these other methods comes additional responsibilities for property maintenance and safeguards. Fireplaces are nice but not very energy efficient. You need to have them checked by an experienced chimney sweep, at least yearly and more often if you use your fireplace often. Burn only seasoned hardwood and use a screen in front of the fireplace.

Portable kerosene heaters are a popular alternative heat source, and used properly, they are acceptable. First, there is no way to vent the combustion caused fumes, therefore the area where these heaters are used must be ventilated. Never refill a hot heater and never refill it in the house. Use only approved fuel in the heater. Never, ever sleep in an area where one of these heaters are being used. All space heaters, whether kerosene or electric, must be placed at least three (3) feet from combustibles, more if the directions say so...

Any time you're heating with a fossil fuel (wood, LP gas, kerosene), you need a Carbon-monoxide detector in your home. Carbon-monoxide, or CO, is a colorless, odorless gas which is created in the combustion process of fuels. This detector will monitor the air in your home and alert you if there is a build-up of CO in the area. CO can cause brain damage and death rather quickly and may not cause any symptoms until it's too late. We've had a few such incidents in the area over the last few years, so let's take steps to avoid any more.

Don't forget smoke detectors. These are silent sentinels which can guard your home against fire by sounding an alarm as soon as it detects traces of smoke. This gives you and your family time to react and get out. But these detectors only work if the batteries are in good shape. Test them monthly and change the batteries each year when you change to daylight savings time on your clocks. Also, did you know that if you are a landlord, it is your legal responsibility to provide smoke detectors in all your dwelling units?

Most of you are familiar with the ACBC (Aluminum Cans For Burned Children) Program, which is supported by the area Fire Departments. In this program, Departments collect aluminum cans, sell them to recyclers and donate the money received to the Medical University of South Carolina Burn Unit. The Fire Departments of Horry and Georgetown Counties are proud to announce that as of 1996, we have donated over $100,000 to the program. This is due to you and the many restaurants and lounges who have given the Fire Departments their cans. Thank you for your support.

Finally, let me close by asking once again for volunteers to assist with some of our programs. We need firefighters, but we also need others for non-firefighting tasks. If you would like to help your community in this way, contact the Fire Department at 238-2314.
RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Family Festival

The Recreation Department was pleased to have excellent weather for the 12th Annual Family Festival, which was held on Saturday, October 5. The event held on Surfside Drive, features Arts Crafts booths, plenty of food, a variety of music and entertainment, and fun and games for the children. The Festival is very well attended, and gets bigger and better each year.

50's Plus Club

The Club meets every month on the 3rd Monday at 7:00 p.m. in the Dick M. Johnson Civic Center. Also enjoyed is the club's "hearty" beach walk each Monday at 8:00 a.m. Plan now to join the group at 3rd Avenue South next Monday at 8:00 a.m.

Christmas in Surfside Beach

As you drove through Town during the holidays, you may have noticed new Christmas decorations on Highway 17 and on Surfside Drive. A very special thank you goes to Jones Intericable for their time and effort in assisting with our decorating.

The Annual Tree Lighting Service conducted in front of Town Hall, was held in spite of chilly, threatening weather on December 5th. The service, attended by over 150 people, kicked off the Holiday Season with singing by the Lakewood 5th Grade Chorus, Christmas Carols and refreshments.

Santa was kept busy answering his phone at the North Pole on Monday, December 9 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The ever popular "Santa Hot-Line" allows children to chat with Santa and bring their "wish lists" to him by telephone.

Classes

There are several ongoing events and classes held daily in the Dick M. Johnson Civic Center. Easy stretch on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9 to 10 a.m.; Aerobics on Monday through Friday from 10 to 11 a.m.; Youth Karate on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6 to 7 p.m.; Oil Painting every Wednesday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; Bridge each Tuesday from 1 to 4 p.m. and Thursday from 7 to 10 p.m.; Chess on Tuesdays from 7 to 10 p.m.; Ballroom Dance on the last Saturday of each month from 8 to 11 p.m.; Square Dance every Wednesday from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Plan now to come and enjoy one or more of these events.

Athletics

Basketball season is nearly over. Baseball Registration for AGES 9-14 begins on Saturday, March 1st at 11:00 a.m. and will continue until all teams are full. Registration will take place at the H. Blue Huckabee Complex on Glenns Bay Road.

Softball Registration for Girls AGES 9-15 also begins on Saturday, March 1st at 2:00 p.m.

All boys ages are as of August 1st, 1997.
All Girls ages are as of June 1st, 1997.
Birth Certificates are required for first-time players.

The Recreation Department is also looking for Baseball and Softball Coaches, as well as Umpires and Scorekeepers. If you are interested please call the Department at 650-4131 Ext. 2.

Restroom Facilities

All Town Public Restrooms will be closed from December to March. Last year, new restroom facilities were constructed at Martin Park on 6th Avenue South and in the Pier area.

Upcoming Special Events

Annual Can-Am Days are scheduled for March 8th through the 16th with several activities and programs planned. Please check with Town Hall for more information on the events by calling 238-4131 Ext. 333.

The Annual Easter Egg Hunt is scheduled for Easter Sunday, March 30th at H. Blue Huckabee Complex. Watch for more information on this special children's event.

BUILDING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT

Thankfully this year's busy hurricane season is finally over. Unfortunately the trend is for more active seasons ahead. The winter months make a good time to evaluate your home or business for changes that could make the structure more hurricane resistant. The demand for hurricane shutters during this period should be slow and pricing may be more competitive than at the beginning of hurricane season.

Handouts are available in the Department for existing homes that show property owners what can be done to strengthen roofs by bracing trusses in the attic and anchoring trusses to exterior walls. If you don't have wind rated garage doors, now is also a good time to beef them up or replace them. If shutters are not in your budget, get plywood now and precut for your windows. Plywood gets scarce during an impending storm. The Winter season is also a good time to get a contractor if you need any major alterations. They get extremely busy and hard to find in the Spring and Summer.

As always, use common sense in dealing with contractors. Make sure contractors are properly licensed and insured. Don't give up front money. Make sure permits have been issued before you allow someone to work on your property. Last and most important, never give final payment until you have proof the Town has inspected and approved the work. The Department wishes everyone a prosperous New Year.

EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER-WINTER 1996

WILLIE MYERS

Willie Myers became an employee of the Town of Surfside Beach in December, 1992. Hired as a Laborer, Willie immediately demonstrated a strong desire to further himself by obtaining his CDL heavy truck license, and successfully completing a Concrete Finishing Class. Then, through on-the-job training, Willie was promoted to Heavy Equipment Operator in April of 1995.

Willie is a dependable employee who serves as the main on-call person for the Street Department. Always pleasant and forthright, Willie shows calm and resolve at each job site. Willie and the crews he has worked with have received numerous compliments from the public on their professionalism and hard work. This past Summer he represented the Town in a Heavy Equipment Operation Contest, coming in with an impressive 5th place out of two counties.

Congratulations and Best Wishes from all of us, Willie.

MUNICIPAL JUDGE

G. DEREK BLANTON

Horry County Magistrate, G. Derek Blanton, was sworn as the Town's Municipal Judge, at the Town Council Meeting of November 26, 1996. Donna Blanton, wife of the Judge held the Bible while Judge Blanton took the Oath of Office, administered by Mayor Dick M. Johnson.

Since the resignation of former Municipal Judge, Donnie Todd, Magistrate Blanton has served as Interim Judge. A contract was negotiated with Horry County, to allow Magistrate Blanton to also serve as Municipal Judge for the Town. Judge Blanton's Official Appointment was signed by State Superior Court Justice Ernest A. Finney, Jr., on November 7, 1996.
CHRISTMAS DECORATING CONTEST

NORTH END:
FIRST PLACE:
James and Jean Mitchell 516 13th Avenue
RUNNERS-UP:
Jack and Pat Cundiff 1513 Magnolia Drive

SOUTH END:
FIRST PLACE:
Jesse and Eileen Hales 1030 Lakeside Drive
RUNNERS-UP:
Bill and Millie Black 214 9th Avenue
Leonard and Valerie Gresik 721 5th Avenue

TOWN DIRECTORY

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS
FIRE / POLICE / RESCUE SQUAD ............................................. 911
Police / Fire (non-emergency) ........................................... 238-2314 / 238-2621 / 238-2811
Jones Intercable (24 Hours) .................................................. 651-6699
Santee Cooper Power Company (emergency) ......................... 448-3070
Sanitation / Public Works .................................................... 238-5531
Town Hall .............................................................................. 238-2590
Recreation Complex, Glenn Bay Road .................................. 650-4131
FAX ....................................................................................... 238-5432
Animal Control ..................................................................... 238-2621
Grand Strand Water & Sewer Authority ............................. 448-1686

TOWN HALL MEETING SCHEDULES
Town Council, 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month, 6:30 p.m. / Planning and Zoning Commission, 2nd Tuesday of each month, 3:00 p.m.
Zoning Board of Appeals, 1st Thursday of each month, 2:00 p.m. / Municipal Court, Thursday, 5:00 p.m.
Clean City / Beautification Committee, 2nd Tuesday of each month, 10:00 a.m.
All meetings are held in the Town Council / Court Chambers located on the South End of Town Hall and are open to the public.
We welcome all interested residents to attend.