

ROCK HILL

SOUTH CAROLINA

Operations Center Open House Set for October 7

A Fun Day of Free Food, Door Prizes and Public Education

In recognition of the 2006 American Public Power Week, the City of Rock Hill Utilities Department will host the **Operations Center Open House on Saturday, October 7**. The event will be held from **10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.** at the City's Operations Center, 349 Columbia Avenue, located just behind the York County Fairgrounds.

The Operations Center Open House gives citizens and customers the opportunity to learn more about the diversified services provided by the City. Educational exhibits will be featured focusing on energy and water conservation, recycling, electric and fire safety, storm water

management, water quality, police services, emergency preparedness and several other City programs. City customers will be invited to take part in a City Services Fact Hunt and enter a grand-prize drawing for a \$100 utility bill credit.

The Operations Center is the primary headquarters for the Utilities, Public Works and Property Maintenance departments. Several divisions of the Finance Department are also located at the center, including the City's warehouse, vehicle maintenance garage and Risk Management division. The facility's more than 250 employees manage the everyday operations of the City's electric



At the Open House, City electric line workers will demonstrate pole top rescue and team pole climbing skills that have gained them statewide recognition.

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Important Numbers

for 24-Hour Automated Service

803/329-5555	Outage Reporting
803/329-5588	Billing Inquiries and Payment Processing

Other Important Numbers

803/325-2500	Customer Service Requests
803/329-5610	City-Maintained Road Pothole Reporting
803/327-6186	State-Maintained Road Pothole Reporting

John A. Hardin Honored for Glencairn Garden Donation

At a breakfast reception on August 14, John A. Hardin, a Rock Hill native and former mayor of Rock Hill, was honored for his generous donation to the Rock Hill Parks Foundation to benefit Glencairn Garden. During the event attended by family members and friends, a plaque was unveiled that will mark the "John Hardin Greeting Circles," the beautiful brick planters on the newly expanded entry to the Bigger House at Glencairn Garden. Hardin's donation serves as the kickoff to a fund-raising campaign initiated by the Glencairn Garden Advisory Committee and the Glencairn Garden Development

Committee, both of which are working to revitalize and expand the garden.

During the reception, David White, attorney and a friend of Hardin's, shared the story of how the private backyard garden belonging to Dr. and Mrs. David Bigger was acquired by the City of Rock Hill in 1958. While Hardin was mayor, he visited Mrs. Bigger some time after her husband had passed away and inquired as to whether she might be interested in selling the garden to the City. He thought that the garden's maintenance might be a burden to Mrs. Bigger and an arrangement could

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John A. Hardin and his daughter, Martie Curran, stand next to the plaque marking the John A. Hardin Greeting Circles outside the Bigger House at Glencairn Garden.

be worked out to benefit both Mrs. Bigger and the City. He suggested a sum of \$30,000, to be paid \$3,000 per year over 10 years. Mrs. Bigger agreed. As it turned out, Mrs. Bigger passed away after only the first payment of \$3,000 had been made by the City. So thanks to John Hardin's

involvement, the legacy of Glencairn Garden – along with the memorable experiences it provides – could be passed down to future generations.

Through the years, the garden gradually fell into a state of disrepair. Then, in April 2004, as a response to the public needs of the garden, Rock Hill City Council adopted a Glencairn Garden master plan with the goal of restoring and expanding upon the garden's historic beauty. Over the next few years, Glencairn will be undergoing renovations and maintenance as phases of the master plan are implemented.

For information on donating to the garden or to any of Rock Hill's parks and recreation facilities and programs, contact the Rock Hill Parks Foundation at **803/329-5620**. Additional information can be found online at www.rockhillrocks.com.

Fire Prevention Week Full of Education and Activities

The Rock Hill Fire Department will celebrate Fire Prevention Week with a variety of activities designed to educate parents and kids about ways to prevent fires. A coloring and essay contest, safety demonstrations and tours of the fire station get everyone involved and help explain the importance of fire safety.

Fire Prevention staff visit each third- and fifth-grade class in the 18 Rock Hill elementary schools beginning in early September. The students learn how to be safe in their homes by seeing the different ways a fire could start in Sparky's Fire Safety House, then receive



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distribution, water and sanitary sewer systems, traffic lights, storm water programs, street maintenance, sanitation services and more.

“Rock Hill as a functional city is one of the themes on which the City has evolved. The Operations Center is the hub of activity for the service needs of the citizens, from water and electricity to sanitation and sidewalks,” said Public Services Administrator Nick Stegall.

Several City departments outside the Operations Center, including Human Resources, Parks, Recreation & Tourism and Housing & Neighborhood Services, will have displays and activities in the front parking lot of the Operations Center. The Police Department will be making children’s photo/fingerprint IDs at its mobile command unit. The department’s SWAT truck, mobile emergency rescue vehicle and the new bomb response truck will also be on display.

The Fire Department will kick off Fire Prevention Week by displaying the artwork of local elementary school coloring contest winners. Also on display will be one of the department’s ladder trucks and York County’s Fire Safety House, a hands-on training tool that teaches youth about fire safety. Theatrical, non-toxic smoke fills the house to provide a realistic view of actual fire conditions.

The Utilities Department will sponsor “Live Line” electric safety shows conducted by Pike Electric. These shows demonstrate the importance of playing it

safe around overhead electric lines. A parade of Public Works equipment, tree pruning displays and other events are also scheduled.

The event is an opportunity for Rock Hill to show its appreciation to its more than 30,000 customers. In addition to free soft drinks, cotton candy, popcorn and ice cream, each person will receive a coupon for one free hot dog, and additional hot dogs will be sold for 25 cents. There will be giveaways, door prizes, entertainment, a DJ playing music and self-guided tours of the facility. For children, there will be games, face painting, a caricaturist and more. Several local mascots will be at the event to greet citizens.

During American Public Power Week, more than 2,000 community-owned public power systems across the United States hold celebrations and special events for their customers. The purpose of Public Power Week is to educate consumers about how public power communities have the hometown advantage for providing reliable, competitively priced electricity, with a focus on excellent customer service and reinvestment back into the community. With customers having ownership of the electric system, public power communities take pride in local people working together to meet local needs.

For more information about the 2006 Operations Center Open House, contact Lori Nielsen at [803/329-5594](tel:8033295594).

Operations Center is Bursting at the Seams

Rock Hill’s Operations Center has been located on the same 13-acre site for more than 50 years. A municipal operations consulting firm has estimated that our Operations Center needs to be located on a minimum of 35 acres to operate at peak efficiency.

While Rock Hill’s population has grown more than 250 percent since the 1950s, the departments headquartered here have had to service this dramatically increasing population from the same antiquated facility. The city’s population is estimated to increase more than 4 percent annually – so you can see how this problem will grow as the population increases.

The Operations Center needs to relocate. But large tracts of land that are centrally located and available at a good price are rapidly diminishing as development expands to meet the growing population. Should these factors pressure the Operations Center to move to an outlying area, costs to provide utility services will likely rise, as vehicles must increase miles driven to reach customers. Finding the most select location for a new facility – and accomplishing this in the best timeframe – will help to minimize any factors that could contribute to higher costs of services in the future.

When you stop by Rock Hill’s Operations Center Open House, take a tour, and you’ll see the need for relocation in almost every area of the facility.



Fast Facts: Operations Center

- The site of the Operations Center has been in use by the City since the 1920s.
- The administration building at the Operations Center site was constructed for Public Works and Utilities in the 1950s and last renovated in 1986.
- The Utilities Department maintains more than 400 miles of overhead electric lines and 260 miles of underground electric lines.
- The City Garage maintains 370 motor vehicles.
- The Public Works Department sweeps approximately 365 miles of roadways within City limits.
- The Property Maintenance Department maintains 564 acres of City property each week and 50 miles of utility rights of way each year.

The Cow's Fault?

Fire Prevention Week, which will be held October 8-14, was established to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. This fire killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures and burned more than 2,000 acres. The fire began October 8, but burned through and did most of its damage October 9, 1871.

Legend has it that the Great Chicago Fire was started by a cow belonging to Mrs. Catherine O'Leary that kicked over a lamp, first setting the barn and then the whole city on fire. There is some truth to this myth, but there is no proof that it was actually the cow's fault. Other theories include that the blaze was started by neighborhood boys smoking cigarettes near the barn, that a nearby neighbor was responsible for igniting the flames or that a meteorite may have fallen to earth October 8 and sparked several fires that day.

Even though the Great Chicago Fire is the most well-known fire to start that day,

it wasn't the biggest. The Peshtigo Fire also began October 8, 1871 and burned through northeast Wisconsin, burning 16 towns, killing 1,152 people and scorching 1.2 million acres. The blaze was started when railroad workers clearing land for tracks accidentally started a brush fire.

On the 40th anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire, what is now known as the International Fire Marshall's Association decided that the event should be commemorated with a focus on informing the public about the importance of fire safety. According to the National Archives and Records Administration's Library Information Center, Fire Prevention Week is the longest-running public health and safety observance on record. There have been a variety of themes over the years, with this year's theme being "Prevent Cooking Fires: Watch What You Heat."



The Great Chicago Fire and Mrs. O'Leary's cow give us the opportunity to focus on the importance of fire prevention and the best actions to take if you are in a fire. Be safe and spread the word!

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information about entering the coloring and essay contests.

All the third-grade classes participate in a coloring contest, while fifth-grade students write essays about a fire safety topic. Entries for both contests are judged, and there is a grand-prize winner for each contest. This year, third-grade students will get to use their talents and creativity to decorate a drawing of Sparky the Fire Dog. All entries for the contests are submitted to

the teacher and picked up by RHFDF staff for delivery to the judges. Judges then decide on a first-place winner from each school and, from these, a grand-prize winner is chosen. The first-place winners from each school receive \$25, and the grand-prize winners receive \$50.

All the first-place submissions of the coloring contest will be on display during the Operations Center Open House on October 7 so they may be appreciated by the entire community. RHFDF will also have a fire truck on display at the Open House, along with the York County Fire Safety House, which will demonstrate proper exit techniques during a fire.

The first-place winners and their families are invited to an awards ceremony on Tuesday, October 10 at RHFDF Station #1 to

find out who the grand-prize winners of the contests will be. Mayor Pro-Tem Kathy Pender, in addition to the city manager, fire chief and fire marshal will present the awards to the winners, and submissions from the grand-prize winners will be on display.

October is a great time to schedule a tour of a fire station. All area day cares, churches and schools are encouraged to call the main station at **803/329-7220** to schedule a tour. If your group can't make it for a tour, the RHFDF can bring a fire truck to your organization. October has become one of the largest tour months for the Fire Department, with more than 3,500 students affected each year.

For more information about fire safety and Fire Prevention Week activities, or to schedule a tour, call Fire Station #1 at **803/329-7220**.