



## Richland County to Take Lead on Managing Transportation Program

Richland County will take over management of the Transportation Penny Program on Monday, Nov. 4, a move that ends five years of private management by the Program Development Team (PDT) and brings operations in-house to save money and improve oversight.

Following is a Q&A with Richland County Transportation Director Michael Niermeier on the transition of Transportation Penny Program:

**Why is the County moving the management of the program in-house to be overseen by the Transportation Department?** The intent of moving the program from a private contractor to County staff is to reduce management costs over time and use those savings for projects. The staff is ready and will be working diligently to show residents we can be counted on to deliver quality management and oversight of the transportation program.

**What does the County's management role entail and how will it differ from the contractor's?** All the roles and functions of the program now will be managed from within the County. All project management roles currently performed by the PDT engineers and project managers will now be the role of the Transportation Department's engineers and project managers. The actual construction and

design work will continue to be contracted, but the County now will manage those construction and design contracts. Additionally, the County has four inspectors who will perform inspection and compliance work for various transportation projects.

**What steps has the County taken to prepare for this new management role?** The County has hired people to assume both the project management and inspection roles. We held weekly transition meetings with the PDT, performed a deep-dive in those roles and functions so we can better understand all of the intricacies involved, and held a series of meetings between other County departments that will assume some of the functional responsibilities of the PDT. In addition, we're close to concluding contract actions related to other service providers to cover services previously done by the PDT.

**How many employees were hired for the transition and what roles will they have?** The County hired three new project manager/engineers to manage all aspects of the transportation and pedestrian improvement projects and design contracts. We still have an opening for one more engineer. The assistant director, who also is an engineer, provides oversight of the project managers, offers technical expertise

and performs other program functions. Additionally, four road inspectors were hired to provide surveillance, compliance and quality assurance to the various construction projects. They work daily on the construction sites performing these functions and closely coordinate with the project managers on these matters. They are the eyes and the ears of the program. With the new hires, the department now has 14 employees.

**How will this transition benefit taxpayers?** The benefits are three-fold. There will be better accountability, transparency and cost savings. Through the duration of the program, we will see a percentage savings on each project as the current professional services fees assessed to each project will no longer exist. Additionally, as we assume full ownership of the program, we can focus on identifying process efficiencies that could save time and money. Finally, we will have the ability to perform some design work on smaller projects that otherwise might be contracted out, which also will save the County money.

**Will the transition impact the order or number of projects completed?** Will there be any impact on projects that currently are underway? Construction is a complex

*continued on page 7*

## South Carolina ETV announces changes to staff structure

*Assistant general manager and director of Digital Strategies positions created*

South Carolina ETV (SCETV) this week announced a slight restructuring and the creation of two new positions – assistant general manager and director of Digital Strategies. Adrienne Fairwell, who previously served as the agency's vice president of Marketing, Communications and Development, has assumed the role of assistant general manager. Tabitha Safdi, who previously served as digital media manager for SCETV, will be the network's director of Digital Strategies. Both transitions were effective October 1.

A veteran communications professional, Fairwell is in the midst of her second stint at SCETV, where she began her career as an intern. Subsequently, Fairwell worked as a public relations professional at various state agencies, including the S.C. Department of Commerce. At Commerce, Fairwell served as director of Marketing and Communications and was the



*Adrienne Fairwell*

agency's spokesperson.

Fairwell holds a bachelor's degree in journalism and mass communications from the University of South Carolina and a master's degree in human resources development from Webster University. Furthermore, she is an Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) designee and is also a Certified Public Manager (CPM) professional.

Fairwell's new position oversees several departments at SCETV, including Marketing and Communications, Underwriting and Content. Combining both television and radio, the Content vertical includes production, programming and traffic

and pledge activities. It also includes the newly-created Digital Strategies division.

Safdi, the agency's director of Digital Strategies, is a 14-year veteran of SCETV. During her time with the network, she has produced countless projects and stories, such as "Our Town," "Original SC" and the all-new "Backroad Bites." Safdi holds a bachelor's degree in journalism and mass communications from the University of South Carolina and a master's degree in organizational change and leadership from Columbia College. She's a Riley Fellow of Furman University's Diversity Leadership Initiative, a 2017 graduate of Leadership Columbia and a member of the PBS Digital Media Advisory Council.

The new division seeks to increase audience engagement across all online platforms.

For more information on SCETV, visit [www.scetv.org](http://www.scetv.org).

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