# Organization Information: Litter Surveillance & Enforcement

*Author: Student B.R. in Spring 2017 section of English 371, Grant Writing*

## Mission

The Environmental Enforcement Department’s formal mission statement “to provide citizens with a high quality of life, ensuring a clean and safe Environmental through the enforcement of County Ordinances and State laws pertaining to Animal Control, Litter Control, and Property Maintenance” (“Environmental Enforcement”). The long-term goals for our organization are self-compliance by the citizens of Spartanburg County, an overall reduction in the litter issues and complaints of littering throughout the county. The programs that support these goals are enforcement of the laws state and local, education and awareness projects and utilization of roadside litter pickup crew. Staff members take part in various Statewide Boards addressing the issue of litter.

## History and Current Status

Environmental Enforcement Department is a county entity that began in 2000 by combining three departments- Animal, Litter Control and Property Maintenance. As a proactive county our leadership understands the adverse effect of litter economically as well as a health hazard. As with every other county within the state, we also have window littering, irresponsible landowners, and those citizens and motorist which choose to violate the state littering laws. Spartanburg County Environmental Enforcement Department was created and is in charged with the responsibility of stopping this useless act.

## Accomplishments

Jamie Nelson has been with Spartanburg County Environmental Enforcement since 1996 and became director in 2010. Lieutenant Nelson has served as President of the South Carolina Litter Control Association, PalmettoPride Statewide Enforcement Committee and Statewide Waste Haulers Committee. “Whereas, further, Lieutenant Nelson led the charge to revitalize the two decades old Statewide Zero Tolerance for Litter Campaign. Under his leadership, the campaign transitioned from a weekend law enforcement initiative to a month-long dual purpose campaign to educate the public and enforce litter laws” (“South Carolina Officer and Affiliates Receive Keep America Beautiful Awards”). The Director of Spartanburg County Environmental Enforcement Agency, Lieutenant Jamie Nelson was honored by Keep America Beautiful by receiving the national Law Enforcement Award for the year 2016. Lieutenant Nelson received the award “for his leadership in Spartanburg County and for his service as two-term president of the SC Litter Control Association” (News Flash). In addition, “The members of South Carolina General Assembly recognize and honor Lieutenant James Nelson, director of Spartanburg County Environmental Enforcement and congratulate him on winning the national Keep America Beautiful Law Enforcement Award” ( “South Carolina Officer and Affiliates Receive Keep America Beautiful Awards”).

There have been many innovative programs the organization has participated in such as the One Mile Challenge. Lieutenant Nelson “issued a challenge in 2016 to all law enforcement agencies to participate in a one mile litter pickup event. The point of this challenge is to get officers personally involved in litter issues in hopes that it will make them more proactive with enforcing litter laws” (PalmettoPride). The organization has spent a lot of time on programs such as the Camera Loan Program, Zero Tolerance for Litter Campaign, Litterbug, and Assign-A- Highway. Spartanburg County Litter Control Division received awards from the Zero Tolerance Campaign for issuing the highest number of citations, in 2014, 2015, and 2016.

## Capacity

The last year’s ticket totals showed an increase in moving violations involving littering. While conducting the traffic stops for littering, the officers also encountered an increase of secondary violations which placed the officers in harm’s way. In 2016, trial proceedings also showed an increase of Defendants hiring or requesting Public defenders or Private Attorneys. This increase was due to severity of the punishment for the crime committed. These factors resulted in the officer needing more evidence of a technical nature to prove that litter had either been tossed or lost from the violator’s vehicle. Spartanburg County thought process on littering violators has always been outside the box so as the violators adapt, so must enforcement. Our department is requesting this year’s grant opportunity hoping to stay at least even with violators.

The agency has partnerships with Spartanburg County Law Enforcement Officers, other local entities such as Greenville County and Union County, PalmettoPride, South Carolina Litter Control Association, and Keep South Carolina Beautiful. The Environmental Enforcement Agency has 19 personnel; 14 are Law Enforcement Officers, 3 are office staff, and the director of Environmental Enforcement.

The yearly budget for this court entity is $420,000.

Litter Control Division of Spartanburg County Environmental Enforcement will only use the equipment supplied or purchased with the PalmettoPride Enforcement Grant for litter control surveillance enforcement operations. Also, the division will continue its participation in the yearly Zero Tolerance for Litter Campaign. Furthermore, this division will submit a Zero Tolerance for Litter report. The Litter Control Division is more than capable of managing the funds of $4933.00 it’s applying for. Along with implementing the program that has been described and fulfilling any reporting requirements associated with the funds being sought.