

For Immediate Release  
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### **Municipal Association of South Carolina honors Bluffton with Achievement Award**

The Town of Bluffton received a Municipal Achievement Award for its historic rehabilitation project. Officials accepted the award during the Municipal Association of South Carolina's Annual Meeting on July 21. The town won in the 10,001 – 20,000 population category. Thirty cities and towns submitted their projects and initiatives.

The Garvin-Garvey House, built in approximately 1870, is a rare surviving example of a home built and inhabited by a freedman's family immediately after the Civil War — and the only one on the May River. Like most historic structure rehabilitation projects, the Garvin-Garvey House project promised to be challenging. So the town hired an historic preservation consultant to assess the structure and plan the project.

In 2008, the town took steps to stabilize the collapsing structure, which was overgrown with vegetation. In 2014, the town re-stabilized the house after weather and termites led to the natural deterioration of the initial measure. During this time, a new foundation and flooring deck were installed. A reconstructed lean-to addition was built using the same framing techniques found throughout the original structure.

The project seamlessly wove together historic and new materials of the same dimension, exposure and thickness. The original interior wall boards, floor boards, roof rafters, shake shingles, trim and door were retained with all of the original finishes.

The town funded the project through grants, private donations and other public funds, and the town's accommodations tax revenue.

Open to the public since 2017, the fully rehabilitated site offers insights into American history while bringing to life the Garvin-Garvey family experiences and Gullah-Geechee culture.

The Bluffton Historical Preservation Society provides guided tours. The town, which is developing an informational exhibit and interpretation design for the site, plans to have additional tours and host cultural events at the site to celebrate African American history and the Gullah-Geechee culture.

In preserving the Garvin-Garvey House, the town also created a model for future redevelopment projects on public land. At the same time, the project pulled together historical preservation organizations, state agencies, private citizens and cultural groups for support, funding and celebration.

"The project shows how to create a community unifier, an historic asset and a tourism destination from a single preservation project," said Wayne George, executive director for the Municipal Association.

These winning entries represent innovative projects undertaken by Municipal Association member cities and towns. Information and a video about the project are available on the Association's website [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc) (keyword: Achievement Awards).



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The Municipal Association of South Carolina initiated the Achievement Awards in 1987 to recognize and encourage innovations and excellence in local government.

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