



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

To: News Media and Community Leaders
From: Bamberg County
Date: September 21, 2026
Re: Bamberg County Honors First Responders in Historic Ceremony

Bamberg, South Carolina (September 2026) – On September 18, to coincide with the 9/11 25th Anniversary and America’s 250th Birthday, Bamberg County Council and Administration hosted a historic ceremony. The ceremony included a trifecta: a groundbreaking (Bamberg County Emergency Operations Center), dedication (First Responders Memorial), and unveiling (Old Bamberg County Memorial Hospital Historic Marker). Bamberg County’s first responders, firefighters, law enforcement, EMS and emergency services representatives, public works employees, volunteers, supporters, and family members were celebrated and honored.

Special guest speakers included:

- Director Kim Stenson, South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD)
“The partnerships of local, state, and federal emergency management entities are critical to mitigating damage caused by disasters, and we are committed to making our communities safer by planning ahead and investing in resilient and sustained emergency preparedness.”
- Director Tiffany Kemmerlin, Bamberg County Emergency Services (BCES)
“The Bamberg County Emergency Operations Center represents more than brick and mortar; this new facility represents preparedness, partnership, and our commitment to protecting our community as quickly and effectively as possible.”
- Chief of Staff Kelly Moore, South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT)
“I was in Bamberg in 2024 after the tornado and was impressed with your team of first responders. The new Emergency Operations Center will help Bamberg County first responders better serve us all. We at SCDOT are proud to be your partners and will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with you on the front lines.”
- Executive Director John Edward Jones, Jr., South Carolina Law Enforcement Law Officers Association (SCLEOA)
“As a native of Bamberg County, I am always proud to be home and especially proud of the Bamberg County first responders.”
- President Jason Dennis, South Carolina Firefighters Association (SCFA)
“Today marks the beginning of three important projects and represents the important role of those in service. This memorial will be a permanent reminder of those who answered the call to serve. May we always remember, be ready, and honor those who came before us, especially as we acknowledge the 25th anniversary of 9/11.”

- Coordinator Paul Eubanks, Bamberg County Fire Department (BCFD)
- Will Rochester, Disaster Preparedness and Government Relations, South Carolina EMS Association (SC EMS)

“SC EMS is resilient and comprises more than ambulance drivers; we also represent the healthcare, emergency service, and public services sectors, and we serve communities like Bamberg daily, not just during disaster.”

- Regional Operations Manager Chris Battilo, Thorne Ambulance Service
- Chairwoman Michelle Martin, Bamberg County Council

“As an active first responder, I know firsthand how much we prepare, coordinate, communicate, and train to be there during our community’s time of need. As the Bamberg County Council Chairwoman, I want to thank all first responders for answering the call to serve. Your service and sacrifice matter.”

Remarks were also given by:

- Bamberg County Council Members Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II, Evert Comer, Jr., Larry Haynes, Spencer Donaldson, and Sharon Hammond, who remarked, *“After 22 years of working toward this initiative, I am happy to say we are finally getting this project underway!”*
- Bamberg Mayor Corey Ramsey
- President Nancy Foster, Bamberg County Historic Society, who provided a brief overview of the Bamberg County Memorial Hospital’s history
- President Bob Snead, Palmetto Regional Chamber

“This particular kind of work is especially important to the business community and promotes tourism and economic development, attracting potential businesses to Bamberg County.”

- Bamberg County Coroner and Colston Branch Baptist Church Pastor Shawn Hanks
- Bamberg County Administrator Joey Preston

“Just a couple of months ago, many of us gathered to dedicate Bamberg County’s Revolutionary War Plaza and Back Country Patriots monument and remembered men and women who answered the call to serve nearly 250 years ago—ordinary people who found themselves confronted by extraordinary circumstances and chose to serve. Today, we honor that same spirit of service in our own time. This gathering comes at an especially meaningful moment: our nation’s 25th anniversary of September 11, 2001. Twenty-five years later, we still remember the firefighters climbing stairwells while others were coming down. We remember law enforcement officers, emergency medical personnel, public safety workers, and countless others who ran toward danger rather than away. Their example reminds us that the term ‘first responder’ references more than a job description; it also describes a willingness to answer when someone calls for help. Here in Bamberg County, we know what it means to answer that call. Our first responders have carried this community through hurricanes, storms, tornadoes, floods, and other emergencies...when the unimaginable suddenly becomes real.

Honor. Courage. Sacrifice. Valor: those words connect the five branches represented with this memorial—law enforcement, fire services, emergency medical services, emergency management services, and public works. Each performs a different role. Each brings different training and different responsibilities. We see you. We value you, and we will always remember your service.”

After the program, participants and special guests held the ceremonial groundbreaking for the Bamberg County Operations Center, which will be housed in the Health and Human Services Complex.

They also dedicated the First Responders Memorial, the first SC memorial to recognize EMS, Public Works, and Emergency Management officials in addition to the Fire and Law Enforcement sectors. The memorial is located at 509 North Street, Bamberg, SC, and features bronze train wheels from the Bamberg County Railroad. The train wheels symbolize how the five first responder agencies must unite when our citizens are faced with unimaginable emergencies, and the names of the Bamberg County firefighters and law enforcement agents who lost their lives in the line of duty are listed.

Additionally, the South Carolina History and Archives Marker for the Old Bamberg County Memorial Hospital Building was unveiled. The Bamberg County Historic Society sponsored the marker.

“The hospital marker remembers. The First Responders Memorial honors, and the Emergency Operations Center prepares. Past. Present. Future. That is what today represents,” stated Administrator Joey Preston.

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For more information on this news release, please email info@bambergcounty.sc.gov.