# Clemson groups up for tourism funds

## Recommendations to go before Clemson city council

By Anna Simon
CLEMSON BUREAU
asimon@greenvillenews.com

CLEMSON — Nine agencies and organizations that sponsor tourism related activities made the list for a share of $75,000 in city accommodation tax revenue to the college town this year.

"I wish we had about twice as much money to give away," said Mayor Larry Abernathy.

"We are trying to dole out the money we have in such as way as to get people to come here to events and sleep in our hotels and eat at our restaurants."

It's all about putting "heads in beds," – bringing in visitors who spend money that helps businesses and the city, Abernathy said.

The city Accommodation Tax Committee recommended requests from nine of 11 groups that applied for the money.

Some recipients didn't get the full amount requested. Final approval comes when the council votes on the recommendation at its next meeting.

As usual, requests amounted to more than the available funding – nearly twice that amount, said Glenn Hare, committee chairman. There's likely to be more money available next year because two new hotels will be open with a total of about 200 more rooms, said Rick Cotton, city administrator.

The successful applicants included the Clemson Area Chamber of Commerce, Brooks Center for the Performing Arts, The South Carolina Botanical Garden, Blue Ridge Arts Council, Carolina Chaos Baseball LLC, The Arts Center, Clemson Area-Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Pendleton Historic Foundation and the Pendleton District Commission.

If approved by the council, the chamber would receive $49,550, the largest share of the accommodations tax revenue.

The chamber and its tourism bureau work are responsible for attracting individuals, families, sports teams, and sports enthusiasts to Clemson, especially during times of the year when no major events are taking place, Hare said.

The grant would fund existing and new programs, support the salary of the chamber's tourism manager and interns, and develop heritage, natural resource and niche marketing tourism projects.

The Brooks Center would receive $8,000 that the committee recommends be used to further develop regional and statewide marketing campaigns. Similarly, the botanical garden would receive $4,650 to extend its marketing as a wedding destination.

The Blue Ridge Arts Council would receive $3,000 and The Arts Center would receive $2,000, both toward promotion aimed at arts patrons from outside the area.

Carolina Chaos Baseball, a summer league program, would receive $1,050 recommended for use in extending the team's marketing efforts to reach teams and fans outside the immediate community through advertising in regional and national specialty publications and via the Internet.

Clemson Area-Fellowship of Christian Athletes would receive $250 toward its goals.

Pendleton Historic Foundation would receive $4,000 toward its continued goal to increase its visibility as a wedding facility. Pendleton District Commission would receive $2,500 to develop the commission's "Discover Where Water Falls and History Calls" marketing campaign, designed to expose tourists to the area's historic and natural resources.