'Model community'



Mayor, CU president excited about Cl... of Cle...

Annual program held at Madren Center



PHOTOS BY REX BROWN | THE JOURNAL

The City of Clemson and Clemson University are experiencing a number of construction projects that include a mixed-use development at the site formerly known as the Clemson Center (above) and the recent ribbon cutting for Freeman Hall (below), a $10 million addition at the university that adds 24,000 square feet of office and classroom space. The projects were among improvements cited at the annual State of Clemson program held Tuesday at The Madren Center. At top, Clemson University president Jim Clements speaks at the event.



BY GREG OLIVER
THE JOURNAL

CLEMSON — A highlight of the past year for Clemson University and the City of Clemson was undoubtedly the Tigers' No. 1 college football ranking for multiple weeks and appearance in the national championship game.

But officials from both entities say there are also a number of other exciting things that have taken place and continue to occur that deserve celebration. One of those areas is growth, as pointed out by Clemson Mayor J.C. Cook and Clemson University president Jim Clements during the annual State of Clemson program held Tuesday at The Madren Center.

"National notoriety has brought a lot of interest to the City of Clemson, being No. 1 in town-gown relations and

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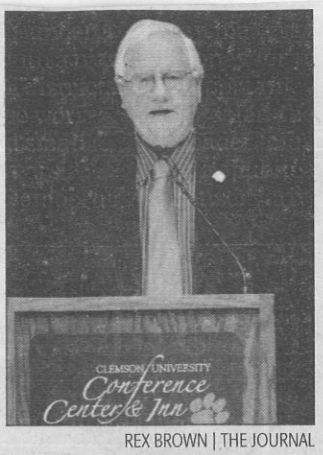
being a Top 10 university retirement town," Cook said. "There has been some significant growth in the town, as well as the university."

Cook said the city is experiencing significant growth investment by the private sector and will see a growth in population during the next few years. In calendar year 2015, the mayor said the city approved slightly more than $80 million in construction permits and anticipates there could be in excess of $120 million in permitted construction in this calendar year.

"We had over $29 million in January alone," Cook said.

The mayor pointed to the planned development ordinance recently approved by city council that will guide the development of the Pacolet Milliken Enterprises land that he said will be "a gateway to our community and campus." The future development will include single-family businesses, apartment-style homes, retail and restaurant space, office space and a hotel.

Cook said the city will also see approximately 1,800 new bedrooms constructed during the next 16 months as a part of four major mixed-use projects. Approximately 60,000 square feet of new commercial/retail/restaurant space will be incorporated into the projects, and an additional 100 apartment units (a mixture of three and four bedrooms) in smaller multi-family residential projects will add another 325 bedrooms to the rental market.



REX BROWN | THE JOURNAL

Clemson mayor J.C. Cook speaks at the annual State of Clemson program Tuesday at The Madren Center.

One development cited by Cook, the Earle Street apartment complex planned development, has led to city council creating additional downtown parking.

"There will be 40 new public parking spaces in the garage facility, which the city will pay for with an Infrastructure Reimbursement Agreement, 15 new on-street parking spaces with time limits and 15 new parking spaces in the attached garage for the businesses that will occupy the ground floor of that mixed-use building," Cook said.

During the next year, Cook said the city anticipates construction of two new hotels — The Abernathy, located at the former site of Larry's restaurant, and The Inn at Patrick Square. Both hotels will consist of approximately 44-room properties the mayor said will consist of "suite-style" rooms.

Construction in Clemson is something Cook told the audience isn't limited to apartments and hotels. Cook said two new medical buildings are under planning and construction phases, with AnMed Health already having started construction of a new clinic building on U.S. Highway 123 and a new 15,000-square-foot two-story medical building in Patrick Square that will be available for multiple medical practices.

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Patrick Square is also expected to begin construction this year on a new two-story commercial building with lower-level retail and second-story offices, as well as a new senior living center. Cook said the project will include 124 rooms of independent living, assisted living and memory care in its 115,000 total square feet of construction, as well as continued single-family housing of approximately 30 new single-family and carriage homes to be built this year.

The mayor also took time to personally thank two people who worked a combined 52 years for the city and recently retired. Municipal judge Gary Barnes served the city for 30 years, while city attorney Kay Barrett served for 22 years, with longtime Clemson residents Theresa Daniel and Mary McCormac taking the reins as municipal judge and city attorney, respectively.

Clements said he has enjoyed the past two years of overseeing Clemson University's "largest campus initiative in history" — featuring 2 million square feet of space under construction, planning or development.

Clements said the university was also ranked as having the best career services and best alumni network and, for the eighth consecutive year, ranked among U.S. News and World Report's Top 25 public universities. Clemson University was also ranked 30th by Kiplinger's in the best college values for out-of-state students and 24th for in-state students.

"All of these accomplishments are a testament of the work of our faculty, staff and students," Clements said. "That's one of the biggest reasons why we're one of the top academic institutions in the nation."

Clements added that the city and university continue to rank No. 1 nationally in town-gown relations and that the university was also just named as the No. 1 college football town in the nation.

"That's unbelievable, but you know what it is? It's the strong relationship between the city and the university," Clements said. "I want to thank the city for being such wonderful partners. People think of Clemson as a model community."

Clements said Clemson Forward is looking at the future for the next 50 years, with the four consistent themes consisting of research, engagement, academic core and living.

"I'm very enthusiastic about the progress we're making," Clements said.

The Clemson University President also pointed to the university's efforts in diversity, hiring a new chief diversity officer in Lee Gill.

"He will help us as we look to create a new inclusive campus," Clements said.

Clements posed the question of what Clemson University really expects.

"We expect to change the lives of our students and give them a better path for the future," he said. "Our goal is the same as Thomas Green's vision — to make a difference in the lives of the people we serve."