

### ALL ABOARD THE JOSH TURNER TRAIN FOR FREE CONCERT 'LONG BLACK TRAIN 20TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR' COMES TO SIMPLY FREEDOM FEST JULY 2



*Josh Turner will perform in the Simpsonville Simply Freedom Fest at the CCNB Amphitheatre at Heritage Park on July 2.*

Country music icon Josh Turner is bringing his 'Long Black Train Anniversary Tour' to the City of Simpsonville when he performs at the CCNB Amphitheatre at Heritage Park on July 2 for the Simpsonville Simply Freedom Fest.

Formerly Celebrate Simpsonville, Simply Freedom Fest is a free event that is a celebration of both Independence Day and the Simpsonville community. Simply Freedom Fest — which takes place the Sunday before the Fourth of July — will feature a concert by Josh Turner and opener country music duo from Nashville Dugger Band before a 15-minute fireworks extravaganza show all with food and spirits available for purchase.

Simpsonville Community Relations Specialist Justin Campbell said thousands of people are expected to attend.

"A country music living legend like Josh Turner with a hit like 'Long Black Train' plus a fireworks show plus free admission makes the perfect formula for celebrating the founding of

the country and the values for which it stands," Campbell said. "While the event has been rebranded from Celebrate Simpsonville to Simply Freedom Fest, the spirit of the event has remained the same: simply family, simply fun and simply free."

The tour is in celebration of the 20th anniversary of Turner's first chart-topping song, 'Long Black Train' in 2003, which was followed by 10 more chart-topping tunes in his career. With his signature deep baritone voice, Turner has sold 6.5 million records and reached nearly 5 billion streams. At only 45, Turner is the second youngest artist to be inducted into the Grand Ole Opry. Suffice it to say that Simpsonville is excited to be a stop on the tour.

The City of Simpsonville rebranded the event to focus attention on the purpose of celebrating Independence Day. Taking advantage of the City's versatile tagline was the obvious direction to go. Mayor Paul Shewmaker said the event name needs to tell people who have not heard of the event why the event is

being held in the first place.

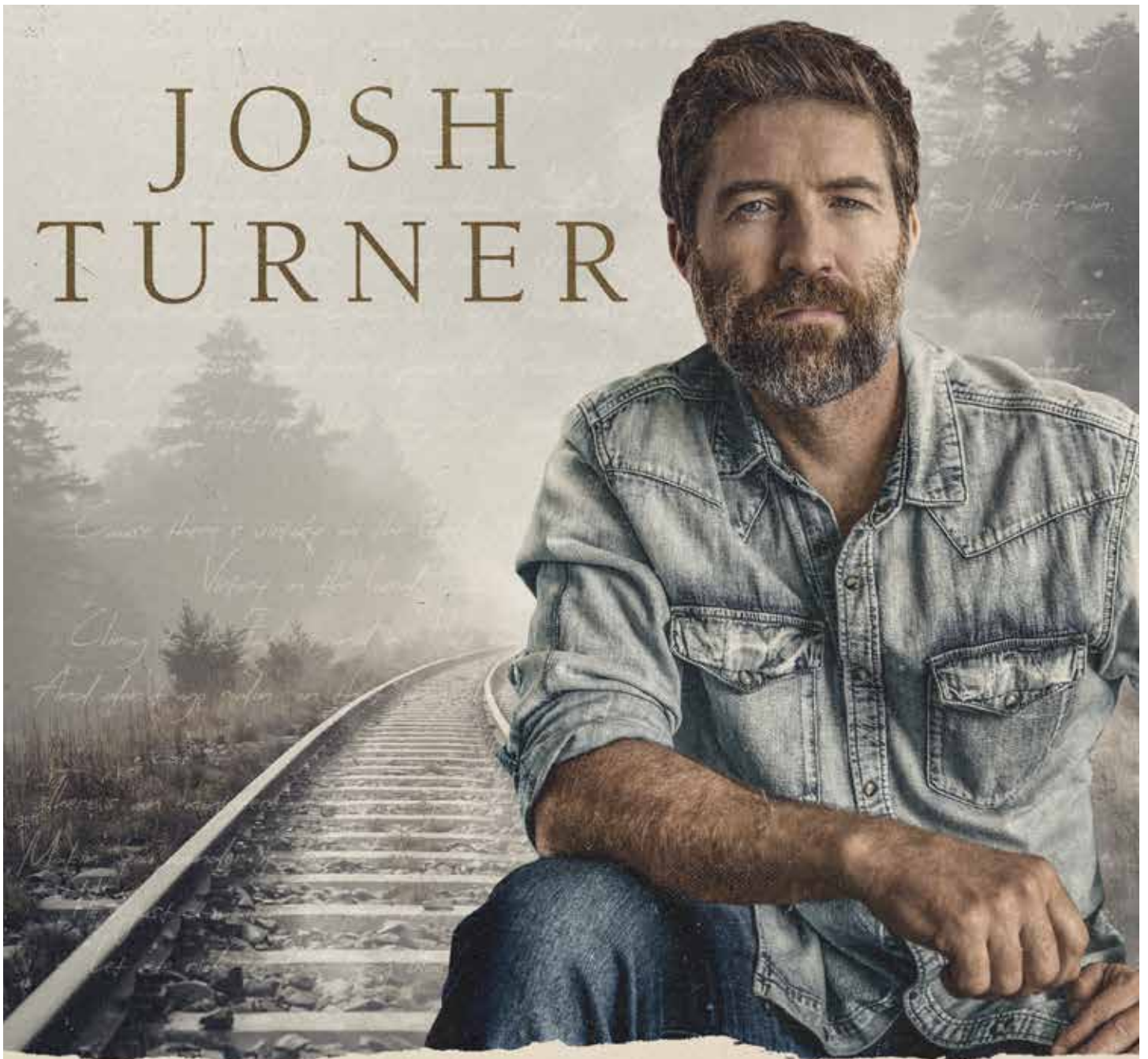
"Celebrate Simpsonville has been an event beloved by the Simpsonville community and beyond, and the name change reflects the continued importance of recognizing the founding of America and appreciating its ideals we continue to strive towards," Mayor Shewmaker said. "The point of the event is to celebrate being simply free. The tagline also works because the event itself is free and open to the public!"

- Parking is limited**
- Gates open at 5:30 p.m.**
- Show starts at 6 p.m.**
- Tickets are not required**
- Prohibited: outside food and beverages, firearms, tents**
- Permitted: chairs, diaper bags**
- Food, beer, wine and liquor will be available for purchase**

sponsored by



# JOSH TURNER



## LONG BLACK TRAIN

*20th Anniversary Tour*

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SUNDAY JULY 2

CCNB AMPHITHEATRE, SIMPSONVILLE, SC

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FREE ADMISSION | [CCNBAMPHITHEATRE.COM](http://CCNBAMPHITHEATRE.COM) | SIMPLY FREEDOM FEST

## CITY AWARDED \$10 MILLION GRANT FOR SEWER REHAB PROJECT



The City of Simpsonville was awarded in April a nearly \$10 million grant from the South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) to rehabilitate the Simpsonville sewer system.

After the City submitted a grant application to the S.C. Infrastructure Investment Program for the Lower Reedy Basin Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation Project, the RIA granted the City \$9,997,625. Simpsonville City Administrator Dianna Gracely said completion of the rehab project will be a benefit to both Simpsonville residents and the Upstate at large.

“In receiving almost \$10,000,000

**Grant helps repair infrastructure, keep rates low**

in grant funding from the Rural Infrastructure Authority, the City of Simpsonville will greatly improve its sewer infrastructure, which has exceeded its useful life,” Gracely said. “At no cost to Simpsonville taxpayers, the City is prioritizing a project that will lead to greater sustainability in the Upstate, address environmental quality issues, facilitate continued growth in Greenville County and provide reliable and resilient infrastructure to Simpsonville residents. It’s a win-win for everyone.”

The Lower Reedy Basin Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation Project will rehabilitate deteriorating clay sewer pipes and brick manholes that were installed more than half a century ago. Identified by ReWa as high priority, the down-

stream sewers in the basin are overloading from inflow and infiltration during rain, resulting in backups, harmful pressure and sewer overflow. The project also addresses root intrusions and structural problems.

“The Lower Reedy Basin sanitary sewer rehab project is important for the City of Simpsonville and surrounding areas and an overall good for the sewer systems in Greenville County,” Gracely said.

**Nearly \$1.4 billion awarded to water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure projects in more than 200 communities in South Carolina**

**Federal funds from the American Rescue Plan Act approved by the General Assembly fund the projects**

## Over 100 pounds of litter removed from city



With the help of about 40 volunteers, the City of Simpsonville and Simpsonville Public Works Department removed 120 pounds of litter from Simpsonville city limits in the Simply Beautiful Cleanup Day in April. Addressed areas were Fairview Road, North East Main and South East Main streets, South Street, Grandview Drive and Fowler Road. Keep Greenville County Beautiful and Palmetto Pride supported the litter cleanup, in which a team from the Fairview Road Kohl’s department store also participated. The City will host a second cleanup day in September.

# SVL for HOG DAY

## Simpsonville officials participate in Hands on Greenville Day

City of Simpsonville officials grabbed shovels and pitchforks in May to participate in Hands on Greenville Day, a countywide volunteer event by United Way of Greenville County. Simpsonville volunteers joined other community members to complete a landscaping project for the beloved nonprofit Meals on Wheels of Greenville on Oregon Street in Greenville. The City officials who volunteered on the Simpsonville team included Mayor Paul Shewmaker, City Administrator Dianna Gracey, Community Relations Specialist Justin Campbell, Accountant Krista Watson and City Hall Dog Rocco.

Campbell said HOG Day is a great opportunity for City officials to give back to the community outside Simpsonville.

“The reasoning behind Hands on Greenville Day in the first place is working together to make Greenville County a better place to live for all,” Campbell said. “Reaching across city limits to help our fellow citizens creates and strengthens partnerships that will endure for the purpose of improving quality of life countywide.”

For about three hours, the Simpsonville crew and other volunteers cleared away leaves and vegetation, spread a mound of mulch and trimmed bushes. The crew was even joined (and mostly supervised) by the Simpsonville City Hall Dog Rocco.



*Simpsonville City Administrator Dianna Gracey, Community Relations Specialist Justin Campbell, Mayor Paul Shewmaker, Accountant Krista Watson and City Hall Dog Rocco volunteered at Meals on Wheels for Hands on Greenville Day in May.*



*Simpsonville City Hall Dog Rocco supervised Simpsonville volunteers for Hands on Greenville Day in May.*



*Mayor Paul Shewmaker transfers mulch to a wheelbarrow at Meals on Wheels of Greenville as part of Hands on Greenville Day in May.*



*Simpsonville Accountant Krista Watson participates in Hands on Greenville Day.*

## MOVIES IN THE PARK PREMIERES IN JUNE

Parks & Rec hosts free summer movie series at CCNB Amphitheatre



With free admission, the 2023 season of Movies in the Park by Simpsonville Parks & Recreation features one movie per month in June, July and August at the CCNB Amphitheatre at Heritage Park. Gates open at 7:30 p.m., and movies start at [dusk](#). Concessions will be available for purchase, and inflatables will be on site.

“Movies in the Park is one of my absolute favorite events,” Simpsonville Special Events Coordinator Lisa Everidge said. “Being able to offer the community opportunities for free family-friendly entertainment is a joy, and I can’t wait to see all the smiling faces on the Amphitheatre lawn.”

Selected movies for the 2023 season are Disney+Pixar’s “Turning Red” on June 13, Sony Pictures’s “Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile” on July 11 and Illumination’s “Minions: The Rise of Gru” on Aug. 3.

Screenings may be canceled or rescheduled due to adverse weather conditions. Follow [Discover Simpsonville](#) on Facebook with [@simpsonville](#) to stay up-to-date on Movies in the Park.



*Simpsonville Parks & Rec will screen Disney+Pixar’s “Turning Red” on June 13 at the CCNB Amphitheatre at Heritage Park | Disney+Pixar*



*Simpsonville Parks & Rec will screen Sony Pictures’s “Lyle, Lyle Crocodile” on July 11 at the CCNB Amphitheatre at Heritage Park | Sony Pictures*



*Simpsonville Parks & Rec will screen Illumination’s “Minions: The Rise of Gru” on Aug. 3 at the CCNB Amphitheatre at Heritage Park | Illumination*

# ‘Showing up’

**Public Works participates in ‘Careers on Wheels’ Day at Simpsonville school**

In a long line of other public service and safety vehicles, a Simpsonville Public Works lift truck picked up and put down part of a large tree stump as students from Rudolph Gordon School on Scuffletown Road watched in excitement.

The Simpsonville Public Works Department participated in “Careers on Wheels” Day at Rudolph Gordon School on March 16. Public Works Director Andy West said in March that Public Works accepted the invitation to “Careers on Wheels” Day to “show up” for the Simpsonville community in ways other than the traditional services provided by a public works crew.

“It’s important for members of the public to see people who

are in public service out in their communities in impactful ways,” West said. “Showing up at events like ‘Careers on Wheels’ Day tells parents and families that Simpsonville Public Works crew members care about the communities in which they work, including those outside city limits.”

Stationed at the front of the school in the car loop, West, Public Works Assistant Director Pete Lupu and Technician



*Assistant Public Works Director Pete Lupu helps students in and out of the lift truck at “Careers on Wheels” Day at Rudolph Gordon School.*

was blowing the truck’s horn.

“I blew the horn to show the kids, then one of the kids blew the horn and then all of the kids wanted to blow the horn,” Lupu said with a laugh. Lupu’s role for the morning quickly became helping the students in and out of the truck.

“The horn was definitely the show-stopper. Seeing the kids’ faces light up when the horn blared made being out in the cold more than worth it.”



*Asst. Public Works Director Pete Lupu, Tech Robert Ruvolo and Director Andy West at “Careers on Wheels” Day at Rudolph Gordon School.*

Robert Ruvolo talked to three groups of students for about three hours. Ruvolo operated the lift truck to show the students how it could pick up large items like tree stumps, but what the students really enjoyed



# 'Behind the Scenes: A Series on the 5 Public Works Divisions

## 'HEARTBEAT OF SIMPSONVILLE'

### Public Works Fleet Division keeps city moving

"The Fleet Services Division is the heartbeat of the City of Simpsonville," Simpsonville Public Works Director Andy West said. "And the three guys who man the Fleet Division keep that heart pumping."

The Fleet Division of the Simpsonville Public Works Department maintains more than 300 pieces of equipment, ranging from chainsaws to fire and sanitation trucks to police patrol vehicles, all of which provide essential services to the more than 8,500 homes in and countless visitors to Simpsonville. Fleet Superintendent Tommy Owens oversees the division with mechanics James Cen-



Mechanic James Centorbi works on a Public Works vehicle in the Fleet Services Division.

Delio first worked for the Parks & Recreation Department grounds division when hired by the City in 2016 before joining Public Works. Centorbi was hired on for the Fleet Division in 2021. The Fleet Services Division crew holds certifications in underground and fuel tank operation and diesel and automotive diagnostics and are chemical spill first responders.

"These mechanics have a wealth of knowledge and an eagerness to learn more," West said. "Their drive to always stay on top of current trends in fleet management make them a true asset to the City they serve behind the scenes."

West added that Centorbi, Delio and Owens enjoy the challenges presented by managing a diverse range of equipment.

"They take pride in knowing that their job is important to so many essential services provided by the multiple departments they serve," West said.

The Simpsonville Public Works Department has five divisions: Building Maintenance, Fleet Services, Sani-



From left, mechanics James Centorbi and Nick Delio and Superintendent Tommy Owens comprise the Fleet Services Division. West said all divisions are essential to the operation and functioning of the City but the public often sees only the trash trucks.

"Our sanitation crews are crucial and invaluable to the high quality of life in Simpsonville, but the other four divisions are as well and miss out on that credit because they are less seen," West said. "That's why this new series 'Behind the Scenes' is important."



Nick Delio is a mechanic with the Public Works Fleets Services Division.

Follow Simpsonville Public Works on Facebook



@simpsonvillepublicworks

**U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION: TIPS FOR SUMMER SAFETY**



Attend public fireworks shows done by experts (e.g. [Simpsonville Simply Freedom Fest](#) on July 2). Sparklers can reach 1,200 F and cause third-degree burns.



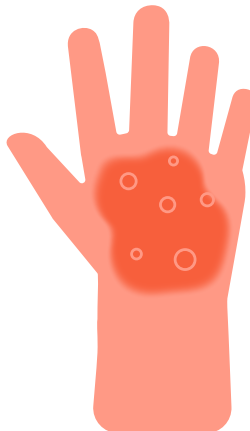
Build campfires at least 25 feet from tents, shrubs and anything that can burn.



Place grills well away from siding and deck railings and out from under eaves and branches. Do not use grills on porches.



Fire pits should be at least 3 feet from houses and flammable objects. Watch children around fire pits and turn off or put out the fire in fire pits when going inside.



**FIRST AID FOR BURNS**

Place the burn in cold water for 3-5 minutes.

Cover the burn with a clean, dry cloth.

See your doctor if the burn is larger than your palm.

**PROHIBITED ACTS WITH FIREWORKS IN CITY LIMITS**

The City of Simpsonville permits the use of fireworks. If you plan to use fireworks in Simpsonville city limits this summer, familiarize yourself with [Simpsonville Code of Ordinances: Chapter 20 - Article V](#), which states the following prohibited acts among other regulations:

It shall be unlawful to

- (1) Offer for sale or to sell permissible fireworks to children under the age of 14 years unless accompanied by a parent
- (2) Explode or ignite fireworks within 600 feet of any church, hospital, asylum or public school
- (3) Explode or ignite fireworks within 75 feet of where fireworks are stored, sold or offered for sale
- (4) Ignite or discharge any permissible fireworks within or throw them from any motor vehicle
- (5) Place or throw any ignited fireworks into or at any motor vehicle; and
- (6) Ignite or discharge within the city limits any permissible fireworks on property other than private property.



## SIMPSONVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT RAISES MORE THAN \$15K FOR THE SC BURNED CHILDREN'S FUND

The Simpsonville Fire Department has raised for 2023 a total of \$15,760 for the Medical University of South Carolina Burned Children's Fund, already doubling last year's donation of \$7,460. Through collecting aluminum cans at all six of its fire stations and then transporting the cans to be exchanged for cash, the Simpsonville Fire Department is able to raise money for pediatric burn patients and make possible their stay at Camp "Can" Do, a camp on Seabrook Island for children who have suffered severe burns. Chief Wesley Williams thanks the public for making the donation possible.



*Simpsonville Fire Chief Wesley Williams and Lt. Robert Hurst hold a check representing the money raised so far in 2023 by the Fire Department to the MUSC Burned Children's Fund with money raised from donations and recycling by the public.*

# Simpsonville **POLICE DEPARTMENT**

SIMPLY HOME.

## CODES ENFORCEMENT POSITION TRANSFERRED TO POLICE DEPARTMENT

The City of Simpsonville transferred in the spring the codes enforcement position from the Planning & Economic Development Department to the Simpsonville Police Department. Retired Simpsonville police officer Maj. Jay Owens has taken over as codes enforcement officer, a title which formerly belonged to City Planner Jon Derby.

Maj. Owens, who started his career as a police officer with Simpsonville in 1997, said he is enjoying his new job.

"I love working with people face to face again," Maj. Owens said. "As a member of Command Staff, you're behind a desk or computer a lot and less in the field, so codes enforcement has been a welcome change."

Simpsonville Community Relations Specialist Justin Campbell said the codes enforcement position was moved to the police department because a lack of compliance can eventually lead to a citation to be adjudicated in Municipal Court, which City leadership finds more appropriate for law enforcement to address.

"Studies have also found a strong correlation between code violations in cities and crime, and given the Police Department oversees crime prevention, the PD is the natural home for the codes enforcement officer," Campbell said

Before joining the police department and graduating from the S.C. Criminal



*Former police officer Maj. Jay Owens is the City of Simpsonville's new codes enforcement officer.*

Justice Academy in 1998, Maj. Owens ran a vinyl siding business with his brother from 1992 to 1997. Maj. Owens retired from the police department in April and was hired on as the codes enforcement officer in May.

"Learning about codes and relearning some things that I forgot as a command staffer is the most challenging part of the position, but I'm definitely up for it."

### YEAR IN REVIEW



Arts Center manager reflects on the inaugural season of the Simpsonville Arts Center

The air in the auditorium was electric opening night of “Children of Eden,” the inaugural production of the Simpsonville Arts Center by former in-residence theater company Mill Town Players. Many firsts happened on the night of July 22, 2022: the first performance by Mill Town Players in Simpsonville; the first performance at the newly renovated Arts Center and the first time in decades the Simpsonville community came together in the auditorium of the old Simpsonville Elementary School.

“Children of Eden” premiered as the first production by Mill Town Players at the Simpsonville Arts Center in July 2022.

thing very special. “To understand the palpable anticipation on opening night, you have to understand the nearly 20-year effort by the community to renovate the beloved building and bring an arts center to Simpsonville,” said Sturgis, who had been head of the Arts Center for only two months when “Children of Eden” premiered. “The mood was a mix of excitement and also nostalgia for many. We hit the ground running in July 2022 and haven’t looked back yet.”

Arts Center Manager Melissa Sturgis said that night was the start of some-

The Simpsonville Arts Center held its official grand opening February 2022, and since

then, the Arts Center has hosted seven productions by Mill Town Players; seven art exhibitions; a ballet performance; visit by Mark Twain in the Chautauqua Greenville speaking circuit; performance by the Greenville Symphony Orchestra and a number of art classes.

year of the Arts Center has been a rollercoaster ride of activity in the best sense possible.

“We slowly climbed that first incline by planning events and programming as the anticipation and excitement grew to a crescendo as we neared the top, and then we careened ahead fast with bustling activity, navi-

Sturgis said the first



Mark Twain visited the Simpsonville Arts Center in February as part of the Greenville Chautauqua speaking series.

gating turns - some unexpected - as we now continue to build upon the already established reputation of the new Arts Center as a hub of arts and culture in the Upstate,” Sturgis said.

Mayor Paul Shewmaker has told City Hall staff that the success of the first year of the Arts Center far exceeding his expectations. When asked what contributed to that kind of success, Sturgis identified the variety of programming.

“Whether the audience is adults or children, young or old, lovers of the visual and performing arts or newcomers, the Simpson-

ville Arts Center has it all,” Sturgis said.

But Sturgis is aiming for an even more successful second year. Integral to the success of the Arts Center have been social media marketing, word-of-mouth and communication with the media.

“The power of both social media and word-of-mouth marketing cannot be understated, especially in the realm of an arts center, the soul of which is community,” Sturgis said.

“Then there are the small things like writing ‘thank you’ notes to reporters who covered our art exhibits and simple kindness to

patrons who may be unfamiliar with technology and need a little help with buying tickets or the former Simpsonville Elementary School student who pops into the Lobby Art Gallery for an impromptu chat and tour. Continuing to foster dialogue, networking, communication and friendship will help ensure that the Arts Center becomes the premier place in the Southeast for high-quality visual and performing arts at affordable costs.”

With Year 1 in the books, the Simpsonville Arts Center is entering Year 2 with “double the fun” as Sturgis phrased it. Instead

of only one performance by Cornerstone Ballet, the Arts Center will host both “The Nutcracker” in December and “Snow White” in April 2024. Instead of a performance with only 30 or 40 musicians, the Greenville Concert Band will take the stage in October with 90 musicians. The Greenville Symphony Orchestra will return with a 40-piece orchestra in 2024. And a spoken word/poetry night is already in the developmental stages, and staff is networking with the theater community to bring more performances to the auditorium.

“I am getting inundated with requests from artists who want to be considered for our gallery space and theater groups who want to be considered for our stage,” Sturgis happily said. “Plans are already underway for a large scale arts festival for the 2024/2025 season.”

The Simpsonville Arts Center hit the ground running in 2022 and has been looking to the future ever since.



*Simpsonville Arts Center Manager Melissa Sturgis introduces artists (from left) Gayle Miller, Lee Ann Zirbes and MJ King at the opening of the X3 Art Exhibition in March. The Arts Center Lobby Art Gallery has hosted seven art exhibitions in its first year.*