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PRESS RELEASE

Florence, S.C. - At his annual address at the Florence Center, Mayor Stephen J. Wukela announced this afternoon that he would not seek a fourth term as Mayor next year. The Mayor has served since his first election in 2008. Filing for the office opens in March 2020, for a primary in June and general election in November 2020; coinciding with the Presidential cycle.

Mayor Wukela opened his speech: "I Rise today with the hope and belief that I have, over the last decade, fulfilled my duty to you as Mayor. It is with that hope, and that belief, that I announce today that I will not seek reelection to the office of Mayor next year."

He went on to explain "The decision is not born of a loss of my devotion to the City and its future interest; nor by a lack of gratitude for your many kindnesses. But I am hopeful that my choice is compatible with both devotion and gratitude."

The Mayor then quickly transitioned to the substance of his speech, saying, "The Occasion calls for me to present, for your consideration and reflection, some thoughts on our City's future; which I offer here as the advice of a soon parting friend."

Mayor Wukela then went on to speak on the importance and future challenges of building and maintaining the hard infrastructure of water, sewer, and storm water public works, as well as roads.

Of note, he urged the need for road maintenance funding; specifically pointing at "the \$35 county road maintenance fee, totaling over \$1 million annually collected by the County on 30,000 city vehicles, and spent by the County elsewhere."

His comments on the current County 1 penny sales tax of which he noted "over \$100 million dollars have been collected by the County on sales within the City; while only \$20 million we allocated by the County to the City for use maintaining city roads" foreshadow a coming showdown between the City and County over the future County 1 penny sales tax referendum.

The Mayor also spoke directly to the issue of race, stating " the single biggest threat to our Future success as City is racial division. We must recognize and practically address our history of division in this City, black from white, North from South."

He went on to say " a great deal has been accomplished – a great deal remains to be done. We cannot succeed if we are divided." The Mayor paraphrased Dr. Martin Luther King: "We remain tied together in a single garment of destiny -an inescapable network of mutuality. The success of each of us is inextricably tied to the success of all of us,"

The Mayor concluded his remarks by saying “I have, over the last decade, been fortunate to lead City during a time in which opportunity met people of good will. The partnerships - the dear friendships - that have been forged and tested made great success possible. We will continue that work in my remaining year, and it is my earnest hope that my successor, whomever that is (perhaps some young-brash, upstart that shows up uninvited - as I did) will have my same good fortune. Thank you and godspeed.”