In February, we began a project to modernize the Museum's outdated website, which had not seen significant changes in quite some time. A completely new website was developed and launched on April 25, 2011.

When you visit the website you will notice a new design, new features, and what we believe to be an easier design to navigate and more efficient website. Some of the new features we are excited for you to see are photo galleries, video tours, and updated calendars.

Another new feature is that current events and news will be directly listed on the homepage under the "News" section. Museum updates will also be listed under this area.

Although many changes have been made, the majority of the content will remain the same having just received a much needed cosmetic face-lift. You will continue to have access to a list of archived books, a current edition of our Newsletter, a friends membership form, a constituent survey, as well as a contact directory for all county offices.

Although it is still a work in progress, please feel free to visit the website at www.calhouncountymuseumandculturalcenter.org.
From the Director’s Desk

So much has happened since our last newsletter. We have celebrated 20 years of the friends, partnered with the Calhoun Players to help produce another fabulous show, and have begun several new projects to continue preserving our county’s rich history.

Our Gala & 20th Friends Anniversary Celebration was a spectacular kick off to the 2011 calendar year. We were humbled and honored by the turnout. We were pleased to partner with the South Carolina Vary Special Arts and the South Carolina Arts Commission to provide us with talented artists, support, and grant funding. Jack Blandley of Ad- erdeen City: did an exceptional job on the food, and guests were chauffeured by Eagle Scout Travis Cam and the Boy Scouts of Troop 51. Thank you to all who attended the Gala and those who contributed in making the night a success.

The Calhoun Players Spring production of The Music Man was a huge success. None of this would have been possible without the Cameron Community Club and the work they have done to update the Cameron Auditorium. I was honored to serve as director of a fantastic cast, who gave their time and talent to make the show extraordinary. We were pleased to have musicians from South Carolina State University perform in the orchestra.

For the summer, the Museum has two major projects. First, we are happy to announce that work will soon begin to stabilize the old Fort Meade Jail. Your donations kept us from losing this historical landmark. Second, we are deeply saddened by the loss of a major supporter of the Museum, the late Mr. C.R. Banks. Through his generous gift to the Museum of his collection of county historical artifacts, it is our hope that his legacy will be remembered and his history of our county will be conserved for future generations. We are excited to get to work cataloguing his exceptional collection.

In addition to the projects that the Museum is heading, the Calhoun County Historical Commission is working on their own projects. One such project is the restoration and unveiling of the New Deal’s Works Project Administration’s historical marker, Senory Hunt. This marker was broken and has been restored thanks to the dedication of the Commission. It will be placed near its original location in Sandy Run. Also, the Commission, in cooperation with the Francis Marion Trail Commission, has decided to take the forefront in gathering donations for a Francis Marion Trail Historical marker, to be placed along Colonel Thomson Highway. This is one of several to be placed throughout our state.

Even with all of these ongoing projects, the continued financial support during these hard economic times has been humbling. Our visitations are up, and our archival researchers continue to spin the county and continent.
Stabilizing the Jail

In 2008, as part of the County’s centennial celebration, the Calhoun County Museum and Cultural Center began raising funds to save the Historic Jail. This historical landmark is the oldest public building in Calhoun County and has served as a library during the Great Depression and a voting center prior to World War II. Overtime the jail has deteriorated due to lack of use and is currently in need of repair and stabilization.

We are pleased to announce that work has finally begun to stabilize and clean up this historic landmark. The first step will be to clean the jail of all the overgrowth that has accumulated over the years. Next, the stabilization construction will begin this following week. Although the jail is currently being stabilized rather than remodeled, this is just the first steps of many in the preservation of the jail.

Your donations were the cornerstone that allowed this project to move forward. We are deeply indebted to all who gave of their steadfast dedication and will power to see this landmark saved for the benefit of our future generations.

Savany Hunt Historical Marker

As a project, the Museum revisited the idea of fixing the broken historical marker, Savany Hunt. Initial research dated the marker’s origin as pre-1954. It was brought before the Calhoun County Historical Commission about repairing and rededicating the marker. The Commission voted to accept this marker as their project for this year. They located a restoration expert, a welding instructor at Central Carolina Technical College named Mr. Axel Rea.

After months of hard work, Mr. Rea returned the restored marker to the Commission for rededication. Currently, the Historical Commission is finalizing plans for the dedication ceremony near the marker’s presumed original location along Highway 176, in Sandy Run. Thank you to Dick Watkins for all your help with this project.

This newsletter is sponsored by the Calhoun County Museum and Cultural Center and the South Carolina Arts Commission, which receives funding from the NEA.
Thank You Ms. Julia Helen Garris

How do we describe Julia Helen Garris?… How do you hold a moonbeam in your hands?

You have shared your talent with so many of us and taught us to sing, play, dance, and laugh. You have found talents inside so many of us that we did not know we had. You are the best! Thank you for all the years of hard work and dedication.

We love you, forever and ever.