

## Holiday Wish List

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It's been years since I wrote out a Wish List. Times have gotten a bit more complex since the days when, as a child, I would pour through the Sears Wish Book for my favorite things. For one thing, I can't pour through a Sears Wish Book anymore – I have to go online. My wishes have gotten quite a bit more complex, too. Even though I'm not a child anymore, I thought it might be nice, in the spirit of the holidays, to share a few of the items on my list with you.

Among my wishes for this season are:

**JOY** in the faces of all of South Carolina's children receiving an equal opportunity for a quality education no matter their circumstances or where they happen to live. Our state faces a great challenge and a great opportunity in addressing the facility and operations disparities between school districts in have and have-not counties.

**PROSPERITY** for all of Kershaw County and its citizens. Locally-owned businesses deserve our special support as they help make our community unique and keep our downtowns vibrant. More than occasional shopping out-of-town and on the internet should merit switches and coal in your stockings on Christmas morning! Seriously, we need to support our neighbors and their businesses.

**COMFORT** in knowing that our natural and historical resources are protected and that community treasures such as Lake Wateree, Goodale State Park, and Historic Camden will be appreciated and cared for for generations to come.

**WARMTH** for all of our citizens as we enter a winter of higher heating costs and predicted lower temperatures. Organizations and charities that provide winterization programs and assistance with citizens' heating bills are especially appreciated this year.

**HEALTH** as many citizens can't afford adequate healthcare coverage and as our vulnerable populations face changes in the healthcare services on the national and state levels. Additionally, the ability of small businesses to provide or continue to provide insurance coverage is decreasing.

**HOPE** for future progress through policies that will encourage and develop local energy initiatives and alternatives so that we can continue to provide safe, reliable, and affordable energy to South Carolinians.

**WONDER** as we count the many blessings we have in Kershaw County and as we continue to seek ways to maximize our community's potential through economic development, growth planning, and educational and employment opportunities.

GOODWILL towards our neighbors all year long as our local charities and service organizations work tirelessly on the many needs of our community throughout the year ... and, yes, they need our time and financial assistance. Even Scrooge was transformed by the spirit of giving.

PEACE in the understanding that we are not alone. Partnerships and cooperation between individuals and businesses, local and state governments, churches and charities, neighbors and strangers contribute to the success and health of our community and its citizens.

So you see my wishes won't be found underneath any Christmas tree, but maybe they'll show up in small ways and in increments and through diligence. A dear friend of mine once expressed to his family at Christmastime that true presents are our presence and the appropriateness of our presence to each other. And so one final wish I'd like to share is that you will experience the LOVE of family and friends this holiday season and always.

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