As you all know, following the naming of Tropical Storm Barry, which later became Hurricane Barry, the decision was made to cancel the 73rd Annual Meeting of the Southern Legislative Conference. While unprecedented in our SLC history, President of the Senate, John A. Alario, SLC director, Ms. Colleen Cousineau, and I made this decision for the safety and wellbeing of the more than 1,500 expected SLC attendees who would be arriving in New Orleans on the day Hurricane Barry was anticipated to make landfall.

For our members who have hosted an SLC annual meeting, you know the countless hours and days of planning—along with fundraising—that is required. After such intense preparation by both our Louisiana Host State and our SLC staff, it was a true disappointment to us all.

The SLC annual meetings bring together old friends and colleagues who look forward to seeing each other every year; children who have “grown up” together in our youth programs; and spouses and guests who renew old friendships and make new acquaintances. Our substantive and policy-rich programming is unparalleled, highlighting innovative, as well as practical, solutions to the challenges facing our policymakers and citizens. Every SLC annual meeting offers our members a nonpartisan space where policy discussions spanning the spectrum can be had and ideas can germinate, strengthening our legislative institutions.

In the absence of our convening, we still were compelled to conduct a number of activities. This interim report provides a summary of the actions executed by the SLC Executive Committee. Additionally, it gives us the opportunity to thank all our Louisiana Host State volunteers and contributors who committed their time and resources toward the meeting. We are sure our guests would have enjoyed experiencing the wonderful and unique sights, sounds and tastes of the city of New Orleans and the state of Louisiana.

Until we meet again,

Taylor F. Barras  
Speaker of the House  
SLC Chair, 2018-2019

John A. Alario, Jr.  
President of the Senate

Colleen Cousineau  
Director,  
Southern Legislative Conference
The Southern Legislative Conference is exceedingly grateful for the legions of volunteers from both the Louisiana House of Representatives and Senate who worked in unison for months to welcome colleagues and friends throughout the Southern region to New Orleans.

THANK YOU
Due to the cancellation of the Annual Meeting, voting for 2019-2020 Conference officers was conducted electronically in accordance with the Annual Meeting Interim Procedure outlined in the Rules of the Southern Legislative Conference.

The rules also stipulate that officers of SLC Standing Committees may serve a maximum of two consecutive one-year terms. If the chair of a Standing Committee met this maximum length of service, the committee’s vice chair will serve as acting chair for 2019-2020. Otherwise, the chair and vice chair continue serving in their current capacities.
The State Transformation in Action Recognition (STAR) Judges Panel—comprising state legislators, legislative staff and policy experts—reviewed application materials and presentations of the five finalists and voted online to select two winners of the 2019 STAR award: Kentucky’s MyPURPOSE and Tennessee Reconnect.

**MYPURPOSE**

**KENTUCKY PERSONNEL CABINET**

In 2017, the Kentucky Personnel Cabinet established a talent management strategy and vision to affect how the Commonwealth attracts, recruits, and retains talent. Launched in 2018, MyPURPOSE provides a visually engaging portal for external job applicants, the ability to quickly apply for jobs via mobile or desktop applications or through a LinkedIn profile, and a means for state agencies to customize job postings by including videos with job posts.

MyPURPOSE also created an internal portal for state employees, which provides access to promotional opportunities and professional development. State employees can take advantage of a catalog of more than 1,400 curated courses for personal and professional growth, at no cost. Since going live in July 2018, MyPURPOSE has seen:

- 74,000+ registered users (candidates and employees);
- 207,000+ training registrations and/or completions; and
- 2,500 candidates hired.
TENNESSEE RECONNECT
TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

Tennessee Reconnect is an initiative to help more adults return to higher education by providing a last-dollar scholarship that pays any tuition and fees charged at community colleges that are not covered by other sources of grant aid. These scholarship awards, on average, are approximately $1,000 per student.

In fall 2013, former Governor Bill Haslam announced his “Drive to 55,” with the goal that 55 percent of Tennesseans would hold a postsecondary credential by the year 2025. At the time, 36 percent of Tennesseans met this benchmark. Following the success of programs serving younger age groups, updates and modifications were made to Tennessee’s free college framework to serve adults.

Tennessee Reconnect was developed in response to the needs of employers across the state. In focus groups, they stated that there were numerous job vacancies that could not be filled, as applicants for these jobs did not have the appropriate training or skills, particularly in technical fields. With this scholarship program, Tennesseans of all ages can earn the relevant, marketable credentials necessary to succeed in the labor market. Since implementation, state-wide postsecondary degree attainment has increased to 43 percent.
The Carter/Hellard Legislative Staff Award is given annually to a staff member who has demonstrated excellence and dedication in service to state legislatures in the South. Betsy Howerton, deputy legislative counsel for the Georgia General Assembly, was selected by the members of the Legislative Service Agency (LSA) Directors Group as the winner of the 2019 Carter/Hellard award. Speaker David Ralston and Legislative Counsel Rick Ruskell nominated Howerton for the award.

Howerton joined the Office of Legislative Counsel in 2002, having previously worked for Georgia’s Department of Transportation and Department of Education. In addition to serving as deputy legislative counsel, Howerton is the staff attorney for the House Committees on Education, Health and Human Services and Code Revision.

In his nomination letter, Speaker Ralston described Howerton as someone “who is always a pleasure to work with and provides much needed expert advice on complex issues our state seeks to address and improve upon. She handles these arduous tasks without any indication that the pressure has been too much, because she handles it all with grace.”

Marcia Johnson, chair of the LSA Directors Group, presented the award to Howerton in a ceremony at the Georgia State Capitol on August 14. Among those present were Speaker Ralston, Legislative Counsel Rick Ruskell, Director of the House Budget and Research Office Martha Wigton, SLC Director Colleen Cousineau and Research and Publications Associate Nick Bowman.
The North Carolina Host State Committee cordially invites you to the 74th Annual Meeting of the Southern Legislative Conference in Winston-Salem next August, where you will have an “Outlandish” experience from our mountains to our coast.

In the state’s official tartan, the weaving of landscapes, along with European, African and indigenous American cultural influences, create the tapestry of the Carolinas. Within the plaid, the panoramic views of the region are embodied by the white, yellow and red of the dogwood, poplar and maple, while the shades and tones portray the green, rolling Piedmont hills, Smoky Mountain ridges and the crowning blue of a coastal Carolina summer sky.

A Southern host promises good food, good drinks and good friends! We will have it all in 2020—fresh seafood, eastern and western BBQ, peanuts, sweet potatoes, Krispy Kreme Doughnuts, and Moravian cookies. North Carolina is famous for its vineyards and craft beer; and do not forget our homegrown soft-drinks Cheerwine, Sundrop and Pepsi-Cola! Everyone will have a good time dancing to beach music and experiencing Scottish, Cherokee, Moravian, Coastal and Farm cultures. We also will showcase our HBCU university talent and salute our military service men and women. You do not want to miss it!
In the summer of 2021, the Southern Legislative Conference will return to its origins in Tennessee, the host of the first SLC Annual Meeting, held in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1947, as well as its 50th, convened in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1996. Continuing in this tradition, the Tennessee General Assembly welcomes its friends and colleagues to Nashville, The Country Music Capital of the World, for a remarkable and memorable 75th Anniversary Annual Meeting.

SUMMER 2022
76TH ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE
SOUTHERN LEGISLATIVE
CONFERENCE
OKLAHOMA CITY,
OKLAHOMA
The Southern Legislative Conference extends special thanks to the following friends in the private sector for their generous assistance to the 73rd Annual Meeting. We are grateful for their continued support and interest in the Conference over the years.

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