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## **Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments Receives National Association of Development Organizations 2016 Innovation Award**

**WASHINGTON, DC – Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments based in Georgetown, SC has received a 2016 Innovation Award from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) for the Waccamaw Sports Classic.**

The Waccamaw Sports Classic is a local, quality sports “competition” for active seniors from 50 to 100+ years. It is an annual event that has been taking place in the Waccamaw Region for nine years. The local “games” feed into state and national senior games. The games are sanctioned by the South Carolina Senior Sports Classic and National Senior Games Association. Winners from the Classic are eligible to compete in the South Carolina Senior Sports Classic.

Modeled after the Olympics Games, the Classic enables seniors to come together and compete in sanctioned athletic events including: track and field; horse shoes; spin casting; pickle ball; corn hole and much more. Other activities are offered for our less athletic seniors so everyone can enjoy the day. The students of Coastal Carolina University earn academic credits for their role in planning, and implementing, the games each year. Students also offer educational health seminars to WSC athletes throughout the day.

The event is for seniors from Georgetown, Horry, and Williamsburg counties. The day-long Classic includes friendly sporting competitions, educational sessions, and social events. This year’s event stretched into two days of competition to accommodate our pickle ball tournament which included many seniors from leagues throughout our region.

In addition to the benefits for seniors, the implementation of a Sports Classic Program, strengthens the region’s senior programming for older adults. Community service groups, volunteers and sponsoring organizations/corporations work together and actively promote, healthy aging.

NADO is a Washington, DC-based association that promotes programs and policies that strengthen local governments, communities, and economies through regional cooperation, program delivery, and comprehensive strategies. The association’s Innovation Awards program recognizes regional development organizations and their partners for improving the economic and community competitiveness of our nation’s regions and local communities.

Award-winning projects were honored during NADO's 2016 Annual Training Conference, held October 15-18 in San Antonio, Texas. The 2016 class of award recipients consists of 96 projects spanning 28 states. These projects are presented in an interactive "Story Map" developed by NADO and Esri and include project summaries, funding information, and partners. The Story Map is available online at: <https://www.nado.org/innovation-awards/>.

"Since 1986 through its Innovation Awards program, NADO has recognized the transformative work regional development organizations perform every day. Award-winning projects showcase best practices across the country in regional development that support prosperous communities, stronger local economies, and improved quality of life for residents," said 2015-2016 NADO Board President Jeffrey Kiely, Executive Director of the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments, located in Gallup, New Mexico.

For more information about this award-winning project, contact Justin Blomdahl at 843-436-6123.

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*Since 1967 the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) has provided advocacy, education, networking, and research for the national network of 540 regional development organizations. NADO members provide professional, programmatic, and technical assistance to over 2,300 counties and 15,000 municipalities.*