



News Release

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MEDIA CONTACT

Chloe Field, Public Information Officer
Mobile: (843) 991-1391
Email: cfield@charlestoncounty.org

Charleston County dedicates Emergency Operations Center in honor of Joe Coates

This morning, alongside members of the Coates family, Charleston County leaders held a dedication ceremony officially naming the county's Emergency Operations Center after former Emergency Management Director Joe Coates, who passed away in May following a courageous battle with cancer.

On May 16, 2024, during a special meeting of County Council attended by Joe and his family, friends, and colleagues, members of Council voted unanimously to rename the Emergency Operations Center the Joe Coates Emergency Operations Center.

Charleston County Council Chairman Herb Sass said, "Joe Coates was a remarkable leader whose dedication and steady hand guided Charleston County through some of our most challenging times. Knowing and working with Joe was a privilege I will always cherish. Renaming the Emergency Operations Center in his honor is a deeply fitting tribute to a man whose legacy of service and kindness will forever inspire us all."

Charleston County Council Vice Chair Jenny Costa Honeycutt said, "Today's dedication was a small but meaningful way to ensure that Joe's unmistakable spirit of calm, compassion, and dedication will endure, even in his physical absence. He made a lasting impression not just on the department he led, but on Charleston County as a whole, and the opportunity to recognize him in this special way is an honor and privilege to us all."

Charleston County Deputy County Administrator for Public Safety Eric Watson said, "Joe was the epitome of professionalism and compassion, always leading by example and earning the respect of everyone who had the privilege of working with him. I witnessed firsthand his unwavering dedication to keeping Charleston County safe, even in the most trying of circumstances. Today's dedication honors his remarkable legacy and serves as a welcome reminder of the exceptional standards he set for us all."

Under Joe's leadership, Charleston County became the only county in the state of South Carolina to receive the esteemed Emergency Management Accreditation Program accreditation, which was reaffirmed earlier this year.

Joe began working for Charleston County in 2008. He was named Interim Director of Emergency Management in July 2021 and Director in January 2022.

Photos from today's ceremony, as well as the May 16 resolution adopted by County Council, are attached.

In keeping with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), those needing assistance should contact Charleston County at (843) 202-6917 during regular business hours.

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