

The following contains information received at iBiker.org 10/13/09. We have attempted to verify the accuracy of all information contained herein from posted public records at the SC State Ethics Commission as well as other publically available records and believe all information to be correct. iBiker.org invites all interested parties to check out facts themselves and solicit corrections to any information that is factually inaccurate.

MYRTLE BEACH INCUMBENTS RECEIVE \$24,000 EACH IN CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS!

All four incumbents running for re-election on November 3rd in the City of Myrtle Beach received identical donations of \$1,000 each from the same twenty-four (24) donors or \$24,000 each. These are the findings picked up by several bloggers following Mayor John Rhodes filing of complete Ethics Report late last week.

NOTE: iBiker.org has not been able to verify the alleged donations to Councilman Gray as he has no posted contributions listed at the SC State Ethics Commission website as of 10/13/09.

1. Who is in a position to successfully coordinate the distribution of \$96,000 to the four incumbent politicians and what would they have to gain from doing so?
2. Where did the twenty-four, \$1,000 checks REALLY come from?
3. What is the connection between Palmetto Advocacy Consultants, LLC and Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce since they share addresses and officers?
4. Were any Chamber of Commerce funds dedicated to advertising redirected into the coffers of elected officials who voted to give them the \$180 Million Ad Tax (officially known as the Tourism Development Fee) and, as a result, did taxpayers unknowingly contribute to these politicians through the Chamber?
5. Is each of these LLCs a functioning company or nothing more than a shell created to distribute campaign funds?
6. Do any of these twenty-four entities directly or indirectly benefit from contributions to these incumbent elected officials; specifically, how do Visit Media and/or Miller Direct benefit from contributions to elected officials and what do they do for the Chamber?
7. Did any other politician receive the same twenty-four, \$1,000 checks? Rumors abound that Gubernatorial Candidate and sitting Congressman Gresham Barrett reported receiving 24 checks from the same donors but maxed out at \$3,500 each.

The following timeline is taken directly from the State Ethics Commission reports (www.ethics.sc.gov)

June 8th: Councilman Randal Wallace deposits twenty-four (24) identical \$1,000 checks from the exact same LLCs at the exact same addresses with the exact same Registered Agents. In his defense, Wallace, who has a reputation for telling-it-like-it is, apparently thought nothing of the coincidental windfall as he is the only member of Council who reported it promptly and properly when he deposited the checks on June 8th.

Note: Not all of the contributions to Councilman Wallace are actually listed on June 8th as stated above. Most are, but a few transact over the following few days.

July 2nd: Mayor John Rhodes deposits the exact same twenty-four (24) identical \$1,000 checks from the exact same LLCs at the exact same addresses with the exact same Registered Agents.

October 6th: Filings by Rhodes at the State Ethics Commission (www.ethics.sc.com) showed no contributions and no expenditures. However, just two days after Van Winkle's charges, the Mayor posted a comprehensive list of expenditures and donations that prove, among other things, he failed to follow rules by reporting the first \$500 in donations or expenses within 10 days.

October 8th: Included in \$65,000+ in campaign contributions that Rhodes reported are 24 (twenty-four), \$1,000 contributions by the same 24 different LLCs – many sharing the same addresses and the same registered agent and all “deposited” on the exact same day - July 2nd. If he indeed received them in June, by making the deposits 48 hours after the Quarterly Filing Deadline of July 1st, Rhodes was apparently able to delay reporting them until October.

October 12th: Councilman Chuck Martino submits his online Ethics report which shows he received the same windfall - \$24,000 in twenty-four separate \$1,000 checks – same LLCs, same addresses, same Registered Agents.

October 13th: Only Councilman Wayne Gray has failed to report any contributions or expenditures.

On the surface, it may appear coincidental – just another example of elected officials benefiting from their incumbency. But anyone with Internet access can play connect-the-dots as just a few minutes of simple online research offers up some eye-popping coincidences.

Rhodes, for example, reports that he received 139 contributions in the 3rd quarter alone totaling over \$65,000. By sorting by the “amount” and “date” of the contributions, the alarms begin to go off. There they are: 24 separate contributions of exactly \$1,000 each from the same 24 names that appear on Wallace’s report and Martino’s report. The only difference is the date – Wallace deposited the money on June 8th; while Rhodes apparently waited until July 2nd and Martino waited until July 10th.

LIST OF INCUMBENT CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTORS
Paid to Mayor Rhodes, Councilman Martino, Councilman Wallace and Councilman Gray*

905 Polo Partners LLC	1298 Professional Drive Myrtle Beach, SC 29577	\$1,000.00
Back Gate LLC	1298 Professional Drive Myrtle Beach, SC 29577	\$1,000.00
Prtns of Cypress Plantation	1298 Professional Drive Myrtle Beach, SC 29577	\$1,000.00
Porcher Partners	1298 Professional Drive Myrtle Beach, SC 29577	\$1,000.00
AM & RD Title Agency	1298 Professional Drive Myrtle Beach, SC 29577	\$1,000.00
CF Plantation Partners LLC	1298 Professional Drive Myrtle Beach, SC 29577	\$1,000.00
Office Park Partners	1298 Professional Drive Myrtle Beach, SC 29577	\$1,000.00
Creek View Land Partners	1298 Professional Drive Myrtle Beach, SC 29577	\$1,000.00
Deluxe Land Partners LLC	1298 Professional Drive Myrtle Beach, SC 29577	\$1,000.00
Beach Paralegal Services	1298 Professional Drive Myrtle Beach, SC 29577	\$1,000.00
Guyton Family Invests LLC	4605 Oleander Drive Myrtle Beach, SC 29578	\$1,000.00
Carolina Coast Invests LLC	4605 Oleander Drive Myrtle Beach, SC 29578	\$1,000.00
Robert S Guyton	9502 Lake Drive Myrtle Beach, SC 29572	\$1,000.00
AMRD Real Estate LLC	57 Bayberry Lane Myrtle Beach, SC 29572	\$1,000.00
Garden City Partners	57 Bayberry Lane Myrtle Beach, SC 29572	\$1,000.00
Palmetto Advcy Conltants LLC	7588 Enterprise Road Myrtle Beach, SC 29588	\$1,000.00
Martin Lee Enterprise, LLC	7588 Enterprise Road Myrtle Beach, SC 29588	\$1,000.00
Visit Media LLC	4421 Stuart Andrew Blvd Charlotte, NC 28217	\$1,000.00
Miller Direct	4421 Stuart Andrew Blvd Charlotte, NC 28217	\$1,000.00
Carter Studios	Highway 544 Surfside Beach, SC 29575	\$1,000.00
Jonathan Carter	153 Long Ridge Drive Murrells Inlet, SC 29576	\$1,000.00
Heather Carter	153 Long Ridge Drive Murrells Inlet, SC 29576	\$1,000.00
By Faith Real Estate	5907 Woodside Avenue Myrtle Beach, SC 29577	\$1,000.00
Jordan Investment Corp	3725 Willow Springs Road Conway, SC 29527	\$1,000.00

*As of 10/13/09, Councilman Gray had not reported receiving or spending any campaign money.

NOTES:

1. For starters, there are 24 LLCs – but not nearly as many addresses. That’s because ten (10) of the \$1,000 checks came from 1298 Professional Drive in Myrtle

Beach – the offices of DDC Engineering. Others are in groups of two each on such area roads as Bayberry Lane, Enterprise Road and Long Ridge Drive. Still others are around the corner at 4605 Oleander Drive, the offices of Robert S. Guyton, Attorney (there's another \$1,000 from Guyton at his home address).

2. Guyton, a past Chairman of the Board of the Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce, is also the official registered agent for no less that (13) of these “business entities.”
3. One of the contributors, Palmetto Advocacy Consultants, LLC (PAC), lists its address as 7588 Enterprise Road. However, the Secretary of State's office reports that PAC is located at 1200 North Oak Street, Myrtle Beach – headquarters of the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce. It also lists PAC's registered agent as Darren Gore who happens also to serve as the Chief Financial Officer of the Chamber and, presumably, is the same individual responsible for collecting and distributing \$180 Million in “Tourism Development Fees” from taxpayers over the next 10 years.