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## **A LOOK AHEAD: WHAT'S NEW IN SOUTH CAROLINA FOR 2026**

*Coming Soon in the Palmetto State*

The next 12 months are shaping up to be exciting ones in the Palmetto State. As 2026 unfolds, South Carolina will debut an array of new dining options, attractions, experiences, and milestones. Get a glimpse of what's coming soon below.

### **Attractions**

#### **Black River State Park (Georgetown/Williamsburg Counties)**

Opening in spring 2026, [Black River State Park](#) will mark the first new state park added to South Carolina's system in 20 years. The riverine park will span a network of preserved parcels along the scenic Black River and its tributaries, offering canoe and kayak launches, trails, boardwalks, and day-use areas for outdoor recreation and exploration. Developed through a community-driven Black River Initiative in partnership with the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism and conservation partners, the park expands access to river activities while protecting critical habitat and bolstering tourism in rural coastal counties.

#### **Brookgreen Gardens (Murrells Inlet)**

In January 2026, [Brookgreen Gardens](#) will unveil the Purdy Center, its new Welcome Center and Conservatory Gardens. The \$17 million conservatory features a 5,500-square-foot Great Hall with 30-foot ceilings, an expansive courtyard, rotating botanical displays, a floor-to-ceiling tropical Green Wall, a hydroponic and orchid wall, and a new butterfly center.

#### **Family Kingdom Amusement Park (Myrtle Beach)**

In summer 2026, [Family Kingdom Amusement Park](#) will debut a new Rocky Mountain Construction single-rail roller coaster rising more than 100 feet, adding to its collection of more than 35 rides. The park will also celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its iconic Swamp Fox wooden roller coaster in 2026.

#### **Carolina Bight Birding Center (Lowcountry)**

Slated to open to the public in 2026, the [Carolina Bight Birding Center](#) will introduce a new

conservation-focused destination in Okatie, celebrating the rich birdlife and ecosystems of South Carolina's southern Lowcountry. Set amid wetlands, coastal forests, and scenic trails, the center is designed to offer interpretive exhibits, educational programming, and guided birding experiences that highlight the region's role as a critical migratory corridor. Once open, the facility will serve as a hub for birders, nature enthusiasts, and families while advancing environmental stewardship and eco-tourism in the Lowcountry.

## **Downtown Development & Revitalization**

### **Coastal Centre (Conway)**

Conway's [Coastal Centre](#) is undergoing a long-anticipated \$60M revitalization, introducing new grocery stores, shops, and restaurants that will significantly enhance the area's retail and dining options.

### **Aiken Downtown Retail Growth (Aiken)**

Downtown [Aiken](#) continues to expand its locally owned retail scene, now anchored by two antique-style malls alongside a growing collection of independent boutiques. With no national chains, the downtown mix skews toward high-end women's fashion, equestrian apparel and gear, and specialty shops, complemented by restaurants, bars, cafés, and a full-service spa. Together, these additions reinforce Aiken's walkable downtown as a distinctive shopping and leisure destination rooted in local character.

### **Downtown Chester Mixed-Use Redevelopment (Chester)**

Opening in early 2026, a historic downtown redevelopment at [140 Gadsden Street](#) will bring new residential and dining energy to Chester's city center. Housed in a restored 1920s–1930s department store, the project will introduce modern apartments alongside a restaurant and coffee shop, preserving the building's architectural character while supporting walkability, local businesses, and overnight visitation in downtown Chester.

## **Arts & Culture**

### **Carolina Rising (Gaffney)**

Slated to open in 2026, [Carolina Rising](#) is a new immersive history attraction taking shape at Gaffney's historic Carnegie Library. Led by the City of Gaffney, the project will transform the landmark into a Revolutionary War-themed, interactive experience, using multimedia storytelling and educational exhibits to spotlight South Carolina's role in the nation's founding. The attraction is a key component of Gaffney's broader downtown revitalization and tourism strategy.

### **Veterans History Center (Chester County)**

Slated to open in late 2026, the [Veterans History Center](#) will debut as a new heritage tourism attraction at the Gateway Conference Center, welcoming visitors at one of Chester County's primary arrival points. Supported by a state grant, the center will feature immersive storytelling,

interactive exhibits, and curated displays honoring Chester County veterans across multiple eras of American military history. Designed to serve as both an educational resource and a tourism gateway, the center will help visitors connect with the county's people, places, and past while enhancing the destination's cultural tourism offerings.

#### **Jonathan Green Maritime Cultural Center (Beaufort)**

Opening in March 2026, the [Jonathan Green Maritime Cultural Center](#) at the University of South Carolina Beaufort will celebrate and preserve the rich maritime heritage and cultural traditions of the Lowcountry and the African Diaspora. Named for celebrated Lowcountry artist Jonathan Green — known for his vibrant depictions of Gullah culture and history — the center will feature exhibitions, programs, and interpretive experiences that explore the Black maritime legacy of coastal communities. The new institution enhances Beaufort's cultural landscape while highlighting a long-underrepresented facet of coastal history.

#### **Broadway Theater (Myrtle Beach)**

As part of Myrtle Beach's growing Arts and Innovation District, the historic [Broadway Theater](#) will be restored and reimaged as a 300-seat performing arts center. The City of Myrtle Beach and Coastal Carolina University are partnering on the project, with completion targeted for summer 2026.

#### **Trueline (Greenville)**

Opening in 2026, [Trueline](#) is a new 1,700-capacity music venue from a House of Blues co-founder. The venue will host approximately 130 shows annually and feature a tiered main hall with mezzanine seating, a 200-seat intimate performance space, rooftop terrace, and courtyard, positioning Greenville as a regional live-music hub.

#### **Coach Music Factory (Greenville)**

The historic Roe Coach Factory is being transformed into [Coach Music Factory](#), a two-story, standing-room-only music venue as part of the Peace Center's "A Music Project" campus expansion. Opening in early 2026, the venue will host a wide range of genres, from rock and pop to jazz, R&B, and electronic music.

#### **The Mockingbird (Greenville)**

Opening in January 2026, [The Mockingbird](#) is the Peace Center's new 180-seat listening room, bar, and lounge housed in the restored Markley and Gullick buildings on Main Street. The venue launches with a yearlong "Song Sessions" series curated by Nashville songwriter Maia Sharp, beginning January 17.

#### **Emanuel Nine Memorial (Charleston)**

Slated to open in 2026, the [Emanuel Nine Memorial](#) will honor the lives of the nine individuals killed at Mother Emanuel AME Church in 2015. Located adjacent to the historic church, the memorial will serve as a permanent space for reflection, remembrance, and education, recognizing the victims' legacy while acknowledging Charleston's broader history and ongoing commitment to reconciliation.

### **Anson Street African Burial Ground Memorial (Charleston)**

In December 2025, Charleston dedicated the long-awaited [Anson Street African Burial Ground Memorial](#), a permanent space honoring 36 ancestors of African descent whose remains were uncovered during construction of the Gaillard Center. The memorial's design features 36 pairs of bronze hands rising from the soil where the ancestors were reinterred — each cast from living community members to reflect the individuals' ages, gender, and heritage — serving as a place of reflection, education, and remembrance of those whose lives helped shape the city's history.

### **Sumter Springfest (Sumter)**

Returning March 21, 2026, the annual [Sumter Springfest](#) brings live music, local food, and family-friendly entertainment to downtown Sumter. Featuring a lineup of regional and touring bands, the event serves as a major community fundraiser and one of the city's signature springtime celebrations, attracting thousands of attendees to kick off the season.

### **Aiken Arts & Cultural Programming (Aiken)**

In 2026, Aiken's arts and cultural calendar takes center stage with an expanded lineup of music, performance, and heritage-driven programming. Highlights include [Joye in Aiken Performing Arts Festival](#), a multi-day spring festival bringing Grammy-winning artists and nationally recognized performers to the city, alongside new concert programming from the [Aiken Symphony Orchestra](#). The [Aiken Center for African American History, Art & Culture](#) will present a dance history series tracing movement traditions from Africa to the United States, while live music continues to grow at [Stable View](#) with seasonal bluegrass concerts. Aiken's signature Spring and Fall [Steeplechase](#) events also return, blending sport, tradition, and community celebration.

## **Sports & Recreation**

### **Pelicans Ballpark (Myrtle Beach)**

The home of the [Myrtle Beach Pelicans](#) is undergoing a \$20 million renovation, including a new player performance center, expanded clubhouses, field enhancements, upgraded seating and suites, and 9,200 square feet of meeting space. The project is slated to open in spring 2026.

### **The PicklePort (Myrtle Beach)**

Opening in 2026, [The PicklePort](#) will be a premier indoor-outdoor pickleball destination featuring 12 climate-controlled indoor courts, six covered outdoor courts, a pro shop, snack bar, instruction areas, and social gathering spaces.

### **The Back Nine Golf (Aiken)**

Opened in late 2025, Aiken's most advanced indoor golf simulator venue, the [Back Nine](#), offers 24/7 virtual access to world-class courses, helping golfers refine their game year-round.

### **GE Vernova Park at BridgeWay Station (Mauldin)**

Opening in 2026, this 6,300-seat multi-use stadium will become the permanent home of Greenville's two soccer clubs — Triumph SC and Liberty SC. The [GE Vernova Park at BridgeWay Station](#) will also host concerts, festivals, youth sports, and community events in the heart of BridgeWay Station.

### **Banana Ball at Fifth Third Park (Spartanburg)**

In 2026, Fifth Third Park in Spartanburg will welcome [Banana Ball](#), the fast-paced, fan-first baseball phenomenon from the Savannah Bananas organization. The event builds on the momentum of the Hub City Spartanburgers' second season, bringing a nationally buzzed-about sports entertainment experience to the Upstate and spotlighting the region's growing profile as a host for marquee sporting events.

## **Culinary**

### **Dootsie's (Greenville)**

Opening in spring 2026, Dootsie's is already named one of the year's most anticipated restaurant openings by [Time Out](#). Led by chef Joe Cash—whose restaurant Scoundrel recently earned its first Michelin star—the concept blends classic Roman pastas with Italian-American favorites, including a reimagined spaghetti Bolognese inspired by Cash's grandmother, the restaurant's namesake. An open kitchen and glass-enclosed pasta room will spotlight fresh pasta made daily.

### **Chef Nico Abello's New Restaurant (Greenville)**

Opening in early 2026, [Chef Nico Abello](#) will debut a 50-seat tasting-menu restaurant in downtown Greenville, perched above [The Lazy Goat](#) with views of the Reedy River. The as-yet-unnamed concept draws inspiration from his Michelin-starred L'Appart in Manhattan.

### **Quarter French (Charleston)**

The owners of [Quarter French](#) plan a spring 2026 opening for their forthcoming neighborhood bistro in Charleston's French Quarter. The restaurant will offer lowcountry flavors with a French twist.

### **357 Brewers (Myrtle Beach)**

A \$6.4 million investment, [357 Brewers](#) will open a 10,000-square-foot craft brewery at Grande Dunes Marina in summer 2026, producing beer on-site and offering outdoor gathering spaces and immersive guest experiences.

### **Ole Smoky Distillery (Myrtle Beach)**

[Ole Smoky Distillery](#) will debut a distillery-brewery concept at Broadway at the Beach in 2026, featuring tasting rooms, guided tours, a beer garden, food offerings, and flexible event spaces.

### **South Coast Beer Project (Myrtle Beach)**

The team behind the pet-friendly Sneaky Beagle restaurant is opening [South Coast Beer Project](#), a new brewery connected by a scenic pedestrian walkway, encouraging visitors to stroll between venues with locally brewed beverages.

### **Guy Fieri's Downtown Flavortown (Myrtle Beach)**

[Downtown Flavortown](#) arrives on the Grand Strand in early 2026, bringing Guy Fieri's family-friendly, chef-driven dining experience to Myrtle Beach.

### **La Scuderia Italian Eatery (Aiken)**

Planned to open in downtown Aiken's Northside, [La Scuderia](#) will bring authentic Italian flavors and a lively dining experience to the community. The new restaurant — emphasizing classic Italian fare alongside modern touches — aims to elevate Aiken's culinary scene and offer residents and visitors a fresh destination for casual and special-occasion dining.

## **Hotel News**

### **The Cooper (Charleston)**

Opening in spring 2026, [The Cooper](#) will be Charleston's only luxury waterfront hotel on the peninsula. Amenities include residential-style rooms, a marina with luxury cruising vessels, four dining concepts, a 7,000-square-foot spa, a waterfront infinity pool, 20,000 square feet of event space, curated retail, and a grand lawn connecting to Joe Riley Waterfront Park.

### **Live Oak, Charleston Historic District, A Tribute Portfolio Hotel (Charleston)**

Opening in April 2026, [Live Oak, Charleston Historic District, A Tribute Portfolio Hotel](#) will be a wellness-forward boutique hotel in Charleston's Historic District and the city's first Tribute Portfolio property. The 120-room hotel will feature nature-inspired design, a resort-style pool with cabanas, a fitness and wellness center with spa services and programming, a signature Mediterranean-inspired restaurant, a poolside lounge, and flexible gathering space—offering a tranquil retreat just steps from the city's cultural core.

### **Residence Inn by Marriott Charleston Mt. Pleasant (Mount Pleasant)**

Opening in 2026, the [Residence Inn by Marriott Charleston Mt. Pleasant](#) will add new all-suite lodging adjacent to Mount Pleasant Towne Centre, minutes from Historic Charleston and the area's beaches. The extended-stay property will offer fully appointed suites with kitchens, an outdoor pool, fitness center, and convenient access to shopping, dining, and entertainment, enhancing accommodations options for visitors and longer-stay travelers alike.

### **LivSmart Studios by Hilton Columbia Greystone (Columbia)**

Opening in June 2026, [LivSmart Studios by Hilton Columbia Greystone](#) will debut as Hilton's first LivSmart property in South Carolina. Designed for long-stay travelers, the 113-room hotel will feature modern apartment-style suites with full kitchens, a retail market, fitness center, guest laundry, and an outdoor gathering space with grills and fire pits, offering a flexible, community-oriented lodging option just off Greystone Boulevard.

### **The Lantern (Columbia)**

Set within the Historic Columbia Central Fire Station, [The Lantern](#) will open in Columbia's Vista district on Jan. 21, 2026. The hotel features 59 thoughtfully designed rooms and suites across three connected buildings. The restored Fire Tower offers two unique rooms and a four-story suite with sweeping views of Downtown Columbia and the Capitol.

### **Hampton Inn & Home2 Suites (Aiken)**

A dual-branded [Hampton Inn and Home2 Suites](#) will open on Aiken's South Side in fall 2026, expanding lodging options for both short- and long-term stays.

### **Oliver Hospitality (Aiken)**

[Oliver Hospitality](#) is redeveloping six downtown parcels into a mixed-use project anchored by a boutique hotel that blends restored historic buildings with a thoughtfully designed four-story addition.

### **The Veranda on Main (Abbeville)**

Entering a new chapter under the Stoll family's ownership, [The Veranda on Main](#) is now offered as an exclusive whole-house lodging experience in downtown Abbeville. The Greek Revival-style property is positioned for group stays such as retreats, weddings, and special gatherings, pairing thoughtfully appointed interiors with a strong emphasis on community engagement, local partnerships, and curated experiences that connect guests to Abbeville's history and small-town culture.

## **Notable Milestones & Anniversaries**

### **SC250 South Carolina**

South Carolina played a defining role in the American Revolution, with pivotal battles, leaders, and communities shaping the path to independence across the state. In recognition of the nation's 250th anniversary in 2026, [SC250 South Carolina](#) is coordinating a yearlong series of commemorations, immersive events, exhibitions, and educational programming spanning the coast, Midlands, Upstate, and Lowcountry. From large-scale signature celebrations and living-history reenactments to concerts, community gatherings, outdoor experiences, and historic site activations, SC250 invites residents and visitors alike to experience the stories, places, and people that helped forge the nation.

### **Downtown Summerville Named State Cultural District (Summerville)**

[Downtown Summerville has been designated a South Carolina Cultural District](#) by the South Carolina Arts Commission. This prestigious recognition, held by only 12 communities statewide, acknowledges areas with a high concentration of arts organizations, venues, artists, and creative businesses.

### **Charleston Wine + Food Festival 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**



Twenty years, 26,000 annual attendees, \$210.7 million in economic impact, and \$550K in charitable donations. In 2026, [Charleston Wine + Food](#) will celebrate two decades of showcasing the vibrant and diverse food and beverage culture of the greater Charleston area. This year's event takes place March 4-8, 2026.

#### **Spoleto Festival USA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Since 1977, [Spoleto Festival USA](#) fills Charleston's historic theaters, churches, and outdoor spaces with performances by renowned artists as well as emerging performers in opera; theater; dance; and chamber, orchestral, choral, jazz, and contemporary music. The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary event takes place May 22 – June 7, 2026.

#### **Savannah River Site 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

The [Savannah River Site \(SRS\)](#) marked its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in late 2025. Throughout 2026, the SRS Museum will present a new, NNSA-sponsored, multi-gallery exhibit SRS @ 75, commemorating the legacy, workforce, and milestones of the Savannah River Site.

#### **Gran Fondo Hincapie 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

[Gran Fondo Hincapie](#), founded by retired pro cyclist George Hincapie, will celebrate the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its flagship Greenville event on October 17, 2026. The multi-day cycling festival brings together more than 2,000 cyclists for scenic routes personally mapped and tested by Hincapie.

#### **Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

In 2026, [Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum](#) will mark its 50th anniversary with a yearlong celebration honoring five decades of preserving American naval history. Home to the USS *Yorktown* and other historic vessels, the landmark attraction will spotlight new programming, exhibitions, and special events commemorating its impact on education, preservation, and military heritage.

#### **Charleston Race Week 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

In 2026, [Charleston Race Week](#) will celebrate its 30th anniversary, marking three decades of competitive and community sailing on the city's historic waterways. The annual regatta draws sailors from across the country to compete in a variety of classes and showcases Charleston's vibrant maritime culture and scenic harbor as a premier destination for sailing enthusiasts.

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#### **About the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism**

The South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism is a cabinet agency assigned to operate and manage South Carolina's state parks, market the state as a preferred vacation destination, and provide assistance to communities to develop recreation assets. Explore the official tourism site of South Carolina and discover all the rich history, sandy beaches, and family attractions a South Carolina vacation has to offer at [DiscoverSouthCarolina.com](#).