

May 30, 2023



**FESTIVAL ON THE AVENUE**

The Honorable J. David Weeks  
309C Blatt Building  
Columbia, SC 29201

337 Manning Avenue,  
Sumter, SC 29150

[festivalontheavenue@ftc.net](mailto:festivalontheavenue@ftc.net)

(803)774-2075

RE: Budget Request:

The Festival on the Avenue is requesting Appropriated Earmarks from the South Carolina State Budget, for the following project:

***Festival on the Avenue:***                      **\$100,000**

Requested funds will be used for the following:

The *Festival on the Avenue* (FOTA) is an annual three-day celebration that began in 2007, originally based on the *Bimbé Celebration*, a West African Festival of Harvest. FOTA celebrates the South Sumter community through the traditions of African American culture including family, food, and the arts. The family-friendly festival features traditional soul food, visual arts, crafts, dance, music, and the literary arts which all showcase the creativity and vitality of our community. FOTA begins with a Heritage Night program that highlights African American history and culture. FOTA is a major local and regional tourism draw. The funds will be used toward the general operation of the festival, including publicity, organization of exhibits, artistic performances, and general festival expenditures. The festival operates primarily through volunteers with one part-time staffer who will NOT be paid with earmark funds. FOTA emphasizes that the growth and development of an area is inextricably linked to how that community perceives itself in relation to its history and its current cultural realities. FOTA offers a fun and meaningful opportunity to share the traditions and culture of South Sumter with the broader Sumter community, the state of South Carolina, and the younger generations.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have need for additional information, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Lorraine Dennis  
Board Chair, Festival on the Avenue

Lorraine Dennis Karen Watson Robert Johnson Lana Odom Calvin Hastie Marion Newton John Pringle  
Goliath Brunson Valarie Brunson Gwendolyn Clyburn Coley White Fredrick Gass Gale Player James Dukes