PARKING PROBLEMS

By Richard G. Elliott
Gamecock Staff Writer

More than $375,000 was collected this past semester by the USC Parking and Motor Vehicle Registration Division, according to Danny Baker, director.

The collection included parking fees from meters, events at the Carolina Coliseum and money paid in fines, decals, parking permits and reserved spaces, Baker said.

About $70,000 was collected in parking fines, according to Baker.

The money is used to pay debts accumulated from the construction of campus parking facilities, such as the Pendleton and Blossom St. parking garages.

According to Baker, parking collections are deposited in a bonded account. Payments are made at the end of each year.

USC MAKES yearly payments of $400,000 on the Pendleton St. garage. Baker said the payments will be made for "at least 12 more years," before the garage balance is paid.

There are no plans to build additional parking facilities on campus, although Baker said the possibility of building another garage has been discussed by the university parking committee.

Nearby 12,000 cars park daily on the USC campus, Baker said.

Baker said it is too early in the semester to recognize any major parking problems, such as the problem this past semester at the Wade Hampton Hotel. There had been a shortage of spaces for residents of the hotel.

The situation there has almost resolved itself, according to Baker.

"The shuttlebus has alleviated many of my problems," Baker said. "With the additional 175 parking spaces beyond Bates House and the additional stop and expanded route the shuttlebus makes this semester, parking beyond Bates House no longer poses any inconvenience to the student who parks there."

Baker also discussed how traffic fines are handled and various appeal procedures.

The Traffic Appellate Court is comprised of a faculty member, a staff member, a student member and Baker, who is a non-voting member.

The court is an administrative body which views extenuating circumstances, such as emergencies, when a student appeals a traffic ticket, Baker said.

A PERSON desiring to appeal a traffic violation which he feels may have been given through error or without just cause, should do so within 72 hours off issuance, Saturdays and Sundays excepted, he said.

"The court gives the student an option of automatically paying the fine or the opportunity to appeal before a board and voice their disagreement, make suggestions and give views on the parking situation," Baker said.

"A very good example of this," Baker said, "was when a student was ticketed in a place where he had suggested five additional spaces could be added. After going out and studying the particular area, indeed, five additional spaces were made.

If a student decides to disregard the parking ticket acquired during a semester and fails to pay his financial obligation to the university before the end of the semester, he will not be allowed to register in school for the next semester or secure a transcript or records until the obligation has been cleared, according to a source in the department of Motor Vehicles and Registration.

Also, willful disregard of waived fines may subject the student to having his vehicle towed, the source said.

BAKER ESTIMATED that 10 to 50 students appeal tickets daily. "We really don't keep tabs on waived tickets," he said. "The important thing is to make the student realize what our situation is so the mistakes (in parking) won't be made a second time."

Motor Vehicle Registration tries to help the students, faculty and staff prior to the next academic registration, Baker said. At that time, present renters of the previous semester are given first priority.

If they do not renew their space by a certain date, priority goes to those on a waiting list, Baker said.

THERE ARE 2,500 guaranteed reserved-parking spaces, according to Baker, located at the Wade Hampton Hotel, Blossom Street and Pendleton Street garages. This past fall, there was a waiting list of 400 and now it is 142.

Parking by zones for faculty and staff is based on seniority, with total university service counted in determining seniority, according to Baker.

There are 4,000 faculty and staff, and 1,800 spaces are allocated.

Each zone is over-prescribed by a percentage basis, because every faculty and staff member won't be there at the same time, Baker said.

Also, 130 spaces in the Pendleton Street garage are reserved for Senate Plaza Apartment residents and an agreement was made between USC and Senate Plaza to allow the residents spaces to park, Baker said.

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