



# NEWS RELEASE

**For immediate release**

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## **New Beaufort electronic parking system and new rates take effect July 1**

Dozens of downtown Beaufort coin-operated parking meters perched atop metal posts will be replaced in coming days by solar-powered computerized parking kiosks that accept cash, credit and debit cards and use English, Spanish and French.

The changeover is scheduled to start June 27 when City crews remove the parking meter posts along Bay Street, followed by a similar process in the Downtown Marina parking lot.

Effective July 1, downtown visitors will use the new electronic parking system, similar to using an ATM machine.

“We are taking the next two weeks to inform the community that we’re getting ready to start the new parking system that we’ve been talking about for six months,” said Scott Dadson, Beaufort City Manager. “It’s a change to not have a parking meter sticking up out of the sidewalk, but it’s a change we need to improve the beauty of downtown and to make parking more efficient.”

Also starting July 1, it will cost \$1 per hour to park at any metered space, up from the current 50 cents per hour. Parking fines for violators also go up July 1: Tickets will be \$10 if paid within seven days, increasing to \$20 if not paid during that weeklong period.

Parking rules are enforced downtown from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Parking is free on Sundays and City holidays such as July 4.

Here’s how the new parking system will work:

1. Upon parking on Bay Street or in the marina lot, drivers must note their parking space number, painted in large letters on the pavement.
2. You'll go to the nearest kiosk – one will be located in the center of each of downtown Bay Street's three blocks, on each side of the street – and follow instructions on the panel.
3. The computerized parking machine will ask what language to use, then share information with the user to buy parking time. The user can buy only as much time as allowed for a certain parking space – you can't buy three hours of time in a two-hour parking spot, for instance.
4. Users can pay with cash, credit or debit cards.
5. Your receipt will indicate your parking space number, how much was paid, and when your purchased time will expire.
6. If you are parked in a two-hour spot but buy only 30 minutes' worth of time, you can add more time to your debit or credit card, but only up to the maximum time allowed in that particular parking space.
7. The Bay Street parking spaces are all two-hour limits; in the Downtown Marina, there are four-hour and eight-hour parking slots.

The city's parking system is managed by Lanier Parking Solutions, which also handles enforcement. Parking revenues are split with 85 percent going to the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission and 15 percent going to Main Street Beaufort USA. None of the money goes into Beaufort's general fund.

“Our historic downtown is going to look much cleaner without all these parking meter poles sticking up out of the sidewalk,” Dadson said. “The new system will be easier for our visitors to use, easier to monitor, and easier on the eyes.”

During the transition from June 27 through June 30, parking spaces without meters on Bay Street or the marina lot are considered free parking.

Lanier's “Parking Ambassadors” who monitor parking and write tickets for violators, will be providing reminder fliers to downtown visitors as part of the information campaign leading up to the July 1 change in parking systems.

New informational signs, designed with input from merchants and Main Street Beaufort USA, will be erected in conjunction with the parking change and the kiosks will also have operating instructions. More information will be posted at the Beaufort City website, [www.cityofbeaufort.org](http://www.cityofbeaufort.org).

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