



Title: Hanging Rock bridge to close for repairs
Author: By Joseph Garris, Jr. News Editor
Size: 44.95 square inch
Kershaw, SC Circulation: 4000

Hanging Rock bridge to close for repairs

By Joseph Garris, Jr.
News Editor

A local bridge in need of structural repair is being replaced, according to a South Carolina Department of Transportation release.

Construction on the bridge over Hanging Rock Creek along Flat Rock Road is expected to begin May 4 and continue until October. Due to the bridge's closing, traffic will detour along Hanging Rock Road, onto Horton Rollins Road, and then to U.S. Highway 521. The detour length is approximately 2.93 miles, the release stated.

The bridge was not included on the AAA Carolinas' list released last year that recognized that 40 percent of Lancaster County bridges as substandard. The county was ranked among the highest in the state with substandard bridges behind only Charleston County with 47 percent.

"There's a lot of bridges in Lancaster County that are in pretty bad shape," District 6 Councilman Jack Estridge said Monday.

It's substandard bridges are not something he hears a lot of

complaints about from constituents. The reason, according to Estridge, is likely because many are more focused on dodging potholes.

"They're more concerned about the condition of the roads to think about the bridges," he said.

Estridge is unsure of the reason the bridge is being repaired since it was not first included on the list of sub-

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Bridge

standard bridges.

SCDOT District Four Assistant Construction Engineer Melanie Mobley said the project is part of Gov. Nikki Haley's appropriated Act 98 funds, which attempts to fast-track bridge projects deemed lowest cost, lowest construction requirements.

"There's no enormous amount of re-grading. It's basically just taking out the old bridge and putting in a new one.

Very simple construction," Mobley said.

Many of the bridges included on last year's AAA Carolinas' list were in other areas of the county, including Twelve Mile Creek Bridge and the bridge over McAlpine Creek in Van Wyck. Others included Camp Creek Bridge on S.C. 200 and Cane Creek Bridge on U.S. Highway 521. In Kershaw, only the bridge over Swift

Creek was listed.

According to AAA Carolinas, the average age of substandard bridges in the state is 56 years old. SCDOT officials have said it would cost approximately \$1.9 billion to repair the state's bridges up to the federal standard.

With regards to road improvements, Lancaster County Public Works Director Jeff Catoe said one road within the Town of Kershaw in des-

perate need of attention would soon get it. Ingram Street was severely damaged two years ago when heavy rains left it nearly impassable.

"Works going to start on it and it should be done before the summer gets rolling good," Catoe said.

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This bridge over Hanging Rock Creek on Flat Rock Rd. will be closed from May to October. Photo by Joseph Garris Jr.

Title: **Healthy investment**
 Author: BY LAUREN SAUSSER Isausser@postandcourier.com
 Size: 121.98 square inch
 Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



Healthy investment

Can corporate wellness programs lower insurance costs?

BY LAUREN SAUSSER

Isausser@postandcourier.com

Hubner Manufacturing was spending \$50,000 a month on health insurance premiums for its 90 or so employees.

Then last year, the Mount Pleasant company, which makes parts for trains, found out it faced a 17 percent health care cost spike. Management knew something needed to change.

So human resources started with the lunch line.

The company already provided free lunches for staff every weekday in their on-site cafeteria, but the salad bar used to be an afterthought. Now, it sits prominently out front, beckoning employees to load up on raw carrots, broccoli and tomatoes.

"Before, we used to have some catered lunches that had your soul foods: fried chicken, fried this and fried that. Now, basically, we do not serve anything that is fried," said Florin Felesco, Hubner's human resource manager. "Very easy, very uncostly change. It's just a matter of switching two things around and promoting those salads. Now, a lot of individuals eat salads."

Felesco has no illusions that this small shift will dramatically reduce the amount the company spends every month on health insurance premiums. But the change, part of Hubner's new corporate wellness initiative, may pay off

in a few years.

"Eventually, yes, of course, at the end of the

day, we would like to see lower premiums," he said. "But you're not going to be able to see this in a month or two months. It has to be a year, at least, two years. It's extremely hard to change behaviors."

Changing behaviors

Corporate wellness programs aren't new,

but historically, some of them have been considered little more than "fluff" efforts to encourage healthy behavior. No one ever really gauged whether they worked.

Instead, businesses would control health care costs by changing insurance plans. Employees saw their deductibles go up. They were expected to shell out more from their own paychecks for their policies. Their benefits may have been cut back.

The Affordable Care Act, however, has made it increasingly difficult for companies, especially small ones, to save money by tweaking some of these variables. And as business owners stare down ever-mounting health care costs, many of them are looking at corporate wellness as a way to boost morale and achieve real savings.

Education is a big part of it, says Colin Smoak, a benefits consultant in Mount Pleasant. His firm is piloting a 10-part "health care consumerism" program to inform workers

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Corporate wellness programs

WELLNESS from Page D1

how to be savvy shoppers. For example, some of them don't know that hospitals charge different fees for the same procedures.

Hubner Manufacturing is one of five local businesses

County: Charleston

that's participating.

"What we've found so far in the test pilot is the employees are very engaged," Smoak said. "They are learning new things and they are appreciating their employer for offering it."

Even state agencies and health insurance companies are jumping on the corporate

wellness trend.

BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina, for example, recently teamed up with Fitbit for a corporate wellness initiative. Some BlueCross BlueShield corporate clients are now buying, or subsidizing, these activity trackers for their workers and encourag-

ing them to move more.

"It's not like, all of a sudden, you're going to see (health care) costs go down overnight," said Matt Shaffer, a BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina vice president. "We're trying to make investments in people's health and wellness, as well as be there



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for their financial security when they do get ill or have an injury.”

Giving BlueCross BlueShield members more data through their Fitbits — showing them how much they move and eat, and how well they sleep at night — may positively influence healthy behavior, he said.

But Fitbits and similar “wearable” devices, even at a discounted price, are expensive. The state health department recently launched a low-cost wellness program called “Working Well.”

The initiative was piloted by the South Carolina Hospital Association to make hospitals, and now state work sites, healthier.

Eliminating tobacco and

promoting healthy choices in vending machines are two ways “Working Well” is trying to change workplace culture.

Small steps to wellness

Gov. Nikki Haley’s office, her 16 cabinet agencies, the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Health and Environmental Control have signed on to participate. More than 35,000 state employees work at these agencies.

“We were looking for low- or no-cost activities or policies we could implement,” said Jennifer Read, DHEC’s public health outreach director. “There are ways you can approach this without spending a lot of money.”

For its part, Hubner Manu-

facturing is taking small steps toward corporate wellness. Felesco said they’d rather do a few things well than roll out too many programs that employees don’t want.

“You can have so many programs, but at the end of the day, if none of the employees want to participate in it, it’s truly a waste of time,” he said.

So far, on top of the health care consumerism classes and the lunch line changes, Hubner has offered discounted gym memberships at East Shore Athletic Club. Nine workers have signed up.

Smoking cessation is another tenet of Hubner’s wellness program, even though Felesco acknowledged it will be difficult to encourage employees to quit. Many of these

entrenched behaviors, including unhealthy eating and an aversion to exercise, seem like they’re insurmountable, he said.

“Sometimes you’ll never be able to change a behavior,” he said. “It’s an addiction. You have to have those steps to wean someone from the addiction. It’s not going to happen just because I give you \$50.”

Reach **Lauren Sausser** at 937-5598.

Poll



Would you participate in wellness programs offered by your company if it lowered health care costs? Go to **postandcourier.com/polls** to vote.

com/polls to vote.

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LEROY BURNELL/STAFF

Rachel Varner (left) serves Ron Paquette, CEO of Hubner Manufacturing in Mount Pleasant, in the lunch line. The company started promoting a salad bar instead of fried food for lunch as part of its corporate wellness program.

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FILE/BRAD NETTLES/STAFF

“Wearable” devices, like this Fitbit pedometer, are becoming an increasingly popular way to promote corporate wellness.

Title: **Place political bets, take your chances**
 Author:
 Size: 50.84 square inch
 Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



Place political bets, take your chances

Lindsey Graham's a very long shot to win the White House.

But so were some other politicians who eventually became presidents:

In 1858, Abraham Lincoln lost the U.S. Senate race in Illinois to Stephen Douglas in a vote by the state legislature (the switch to popular election of senators didn't come until the 17th Amendment was ratified in 1913).

In 1962, the day after suffering a humiliating, 52-47 percent defeat to Edmund "Pat" Brown (Jerry's dad) in a California gubernatorial election, a former vice president and GOP presidential nominee bitterly told reporters, "You won't have [Richard] Nixon to kick around anymore."

In December 1974, Jimmy Carter, nearing the end of his one term as Georgia's governor, embarked on what then seemed a far-fetched effort to become the first Southerner since Zachary Taylor in 1848 to win a presidential election — well, a U.S. one.

In 1976, Ronald Reagan, at 65, appeared to miss his last presidential chance when his challenge against incumbent Gerald Ford for that year's GOP nomination fell short.

In October 1991, when Bill Clinton announced his presidential bid, the then-Arkansas governor was best known nationally for rambling on so long — 33 minutes — at the 1988 Democratic convention that when he said, "In clos-

ing," the crowd burst into sarcastic applause.

In February 2007, when Barack Obama announced his presidential bid a mere 25 months after becoming a U.S. senator, he was a heavy underdog against supposed shoo-in Hillary Clinton for the 2008 Democratic nomination.

Courting a promotion

Not long ago and much closer to home, who would have bet on South Carolinians electing a woman (Nikki Haley) of Indian (as in India) ethnicity as governor and a black man (Tim Scott) to not just to the U.S. House but the U.S. Senate?

Sure, the deck is so stacked against Graham winning the Oval Office that he might not even make the cut, based on polls and money raised, for the first 2016 Republican presidential debate in

Cleveland on Aug. 15, 2015.

Still, he's apparently intent on running, judging from this exchange on the latest "Fox News Sunday":

Host Chris Wallace: "Carly Fiorina told us a couple of weeks ago that there's a 90 percent chance that she will get into the race. What's the percent chance you're going to get in?"

Graham: "Ninety-one."

While Graham's presidential quest looks quite quixotic, it could raise his odds for being the GOP 2016 vice presidential nominee from none to slim — and bolster far more

realistic shots at the Cabinet or Supreme Court.

And hey, some folks didn't give this newspaper much chance at the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service.

Pop test (answers at column's end):

1. Name the only three S.C. presidential primary or caucus victors who didn't go on to win their parties' presidential nominations in those years.

2. Name the Michael Dukakis delegate to the 1988 Democratic Convention who won our governorship six years later.

Why not an office pool?

Haughty analysts decry the alleged degeneration of presidential politics into a sort of

"horse race" spectator sport.

Yet in a nation plagued by civic apathy, wouldn't higher wagering participation — and stakes — on elections elevate public interest in our self-governing process?

For instance, in P.G. Wodehouse's delightfully subversive "Much Obligated, Jeeves," the title character gives Bertram Wooster, whom he serves as a gentleman's gentleman, this update on a race for a British House of Commons seat:

"The tide of popular opinion appears to be swaying in Mr. Winship's direction. Lord Sidcup's eloquence is having a marked effect on the electorate and may well prove the deciding factor."

Citing an account from a

fellow butler who "obliged as an extra waiter" at a stirring speech by Lord Sidcup (aka Roderick Spode, aka the Earl of Sidcup) to the Market Snodsbury Chamber of Commerce, Reginald Jeeves adds: "He tells me that, owing entirely to his lordship, the odds to be obtained in the various public houses, which at one time favoured Mrs. McCorkdale at ten to six, have now sunk to evens."

Too bad Graham's presidential hopes are apparently not favoured, er, favored, by fate — or by any British lord's backing. Meanwhile, what are the odds on the competitors in the race to replace the man who has been mayor of Charleston since Dec. 15, 1975?

Win some, lose some

1. Palmetto State natives Jesse Jackson (1988 S.C. Democratic caucus) and John Edwards (2004 S.C. Democratic primary) and Pennsylvania native Newt Gingrich (2012 Republican primary) are the only S.C. presidential caucus or primary winners who didn't also capture their parties' nominations.

2. David Beasley, six years after backing Dukakis as a Democrat at the party's 1988 convention, won the S.C. governorship as a Republican.

Frank Wooten is assistant editor of The Post and Courier. His email is wooten@postandcourier.com.



FRANK WOOTEN

Title: **Bikefest will be test this year, Haley says**
 Author: BY SCHUYLER KROPF skropf@postandcourier.com
 Size: 80.75 square inch
 Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



Bikefest will be test this year, Haley says

Governor discusses security for event

BY SCHUYLER KROPF
 skropf@postandcourier.com

Gov. Nikki Haley said next month's Atlantic Beach Bikefest will be a success if there are "no killings, no harm,

people being treated respectfully" after three people died and seven were wounded by gunfire in the Grand Strand during last year's Memorial Day event.

"We're going to see how this plays out,"

Haley said Monday following her luncheon talk to the East Cooper Republican Club in Mount Pleasant. She called it "a test year" for an event she previously had lobbied to have canceled.

Please see **HALEY**, Page A7

Haley: Curbing violence a test for Bikefest

HALEY, from A1

Haley's comments came after an unprecedented amount of violence erupted last year tied to the annual event that draws hundreds of thousands of mostly black motorcyclists to the state's northwestern coast.

The worst of the gunplay was a triple homicide reported at the Bermuda Sands Resort in Myrtle Beach. Investigators said the shooting appeared to be tied to Charleston County gangs. The killings have not been solved.

The 2014 event was deemed so out of control that Haley, a Republican, asked the town of Atlantic Beach to cancel the 2015 installment in the name of public safety. Officials declined, saying the violence had unfolded outside their tiny

coastal community, not in their jurisdiction.

Also, the celebration remains a key moneymaker for Atlantic

Beach, which dates to the 1930s and began as a coastal destination for blacks in the segregated South. The motorcycle rally emerged later, beginning in the 1980s.

Haley said Monday that officials have spent months developing new levels of management and cooperation between state and local authorities. That includes: doubling the presence of state agents for this year's festival, sensitivity training for officers, and better control along some of the most popular cruising routes.

"We want to remember: Yes, they're tourists and they are

coming to our state so we're going to be friendly like we always are," Haley said. "But we have rules."

Brad Dean, president and CEO of the Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce, said Monday that officials have been thorough in their preparation for 2015. Myrtle Beach, for example, agreed to spend almost \$1 million to buy traffic cones, barriers and electronic message boards to control traffic during the Memorial Day weekend event, media reports show. The barricades will help direct traffic on a 23-mile one-way loop that will help control traffic at night during the weekend.

"With additional law enforcement personnel, new traffic patterns and various other measures now in place, we

remain hopeful this Memorial Day weekend will be much safer, though admittedly it will require everyone to be patient and adaptable," Dean said in an email.

He added, "We would naturally prefer this weekend return to what it should be, a family-friendly celebration of our true American heroes, amidst parades, picnics and backyard barbecues. However, the immediate objective is to ensure the safety of our residents and visitors, and minimize unruly behavior."

An Atlantic Beach town official said she recognized the changes but was quick to point out that Atlantic Beach has gone mostly free of the violence that has plagued other parts of the Grand Strand during Me-

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morial Day weekends.
“Atlantic Beach didn’t have (any) violence,” Councilwoman Josephine Isom said of last year’s rally. “The shots were done 14 miles from us. We don’t

have a problem. We cannot be responsible for the other municipalities.”

Reach **Schuyler Kropf** at 937-5551

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Haley



GRACE BEAHM/STAFF

South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley addresses the East Cooper Republican Club on Monday.



Title: **Lawmakers sticking with plan to fix S.C. roads despite Haley veto threat**
 Author: BY CYNTHIA ROLDAN croldan@postandcourier.com
 Size: 46.03 square inch
 Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289

Lawmakers sticking with plan to fix S.C. roads despite Haley veto threat

BY CYNTHIA ROLDAN
croldan@postandcourier.com

COLUMBIA — South Carolina lawmakers will use the roads plan passed by the House as a blueprint for raising more money to fix the state's deteriorating roads and bridges, according to Sen. Hugh Leatherman.

The pronouncement last week by

the Senate president pro tempore comes amid dwindling hopes for a compromise with Gov. Nikki Haley, who has issued ultimatums since January that she will veto any plan raising the tax on gasoline that is not offset by a significant reduction in

the state income tax.

Haley has used social media to excoriate lawmakers who have ignored her demands, and has been touring the state to call out lawmakers in their home districts.

Please see **ROADS**, Page A6

Road bank OKs local projects

PROJECT, from A1

But the news wasn't as good for the completion of Interstate 526 across Johns and James islands. The board was going to discuss its portion for the project's still-incomplete, three-party contract behind closed doors. But state Sen. Hugh Leatherman had to leave early, so that didn't happen.

State Rep. Chip Limehouse, a Charleston Republican and a member of the bank's board, said the board will discuss the contract May 18.

Berlin G. Myers Parkway

Summerville Mayor Bill Collins said he started writing about the Berlin G. Myers Parkway in 1973, when he was a reporter. So he was thrilled Monday when the bank's board approved the money to complete the final 3 miles of the 9-mile road. "I'm so happy I don't know what to do," Collins said.

The road now runs from U.S. Highway 17-A, near Interstate 26's Exit 199, to West Carolina Avenue. The final phase will

run parallel to the Sawmill Branch Canal from West Carolina Avenue, cross Luden Drive, and end at U.S. 17-A below Orangeburg Road.

Collins said the parkway extension will cost a total of \$74 million, \$20 million of that will come from Dorchester County's 1-cent sales tax and \$24 million from federal sources.

The project still has some environmental permit hurdles to jump, Collins said. But he hopes work will begin in the spring of 2016.

Limehouse said finishing the parkway is important to traffic flow in a growing part of the region. "It should already have been completed," he said. "I see it as a tri-county project."

Crosstown drainage

Riley said the bank ultimately will contribute \$88 million to the \$154 million Crosstown drainage project. The city was expecting to receive the money between 2017 and 2020, he said. "It's a major community works project."

But the city wanted to begin the next phase of the project in

2016. "It's the most expensive part of the project," he said.

That phase includes digging four shafts that connect to a tunnel that is 12 feet in diameter and more than 100 feet beneath the road's surface. The tunnel will run from Coming Street to the Ashley River. Water will drain into the tunnel, which eventually will connect to a pump station near the Ashley River.

Riley said now that the money is approved, work on the shafts and tunnel can begin in late summer.

The city was going to issue bond-anticipation notes so it could begin work before 2017, Riley said. It likely will save \$1.1 million in interest because of the bank's move Monday.

Riley also said there only are about 10 companies in the United States qualified to do the deep-tunnel work the project requires. Two of those companies currently are working in the Lowcountry, he said. The city likely can get a better rate because they already are here.

I-526

Charleston County Council Chairman Elliott Summey said he was disappointed with another project delay.

County Council voted in favor of the \$558 million project in December 2012, but the updated three-party contract between the Infrastructure Bank, Charleston County and the state Department of Transportation still isn't complete.

Summey said the county and the SCDOT already have signed, so the Infrastructure Bank is holding up the project. "What's the problem? Somebody tell me," Summey said.

DOT Commission Chairman Jim Rozier, who also is a member of the bank board, said the contract is being held up over concerns about who will cover the cost of overruns and lawsuits.

Limehouse said he thinks the cost of lawsuits should fall to the county, and overruns should be discussed as needs arise. "We're a funding arm," he said, "not a litigation arm."

Reach **Diane Knich** at 937-5491 or on Twitter at [@dianeknich](https://twitter.com/dianeknich).

Title: **'Almost like Charlie Brown'**
 Author: BY JOHN P. MCDERMOTT jmcdermott@postandcourier.com
 Size: 106.79 square inch
 Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289

'Almost like Charlie Brown'

Latest port sale terminated as auction deadline approaches

BY JOHN P. MCDERMOTT
jmcdermott@postandcourier.com

The State Ports Authority is running out of time to sell its former Beaufort County marine terminal on its own terms.

The latest deal fell apart last week, giving the maritime agency about two months to line up a buyer.

Otherwise, the former Port of Port Royal will go on the auction block if it isn't sold by June 30 under legislation that Gov. Nikki Haley signed in 2014.

The SPA would have an extra 90 days to finalize a deal if it puts the waterfront site under a sales contract before the mid-year deadline.

The agency said its \$15.42 million deal with Furman Co. Investment Advisory Service was terminated Friday "despite the good efforts" of the Greenville-based buyer.

"It became apparent that the time allowed by the contract to complete due diligence would expire with some of the purchaser's require-

ments incomplete, leaving the purchaser unable to proceed to closing under the terms of the contract," the SPA said in a written statement.

The ports authority "intends to solicit new offers for the property without delay."

It's the fourth time that a deal to sell the land has fallen through since 2006. It's another disappointing turn for Port Royal business owners

and residents who want the deepwater site to be redeveloped into homes and commercial space and provide a boost to the area's economy.

"It's almost like Charlie Brown," said state Sen. Tom Davis, R-Beaufort. "You're expecting Lucy to hold the football, and then at the last minute she pulls it away from you."

The 317-acre site includes 52 developable acres on Battery Creek. The rest is marsh.

The SPA operated a cargo terminal on the property starting in 1958. The General Assem-

bly ordered the port closed more than a decade ago and directed the SPA to sell the site. The original deadline was the end of 2009.

Furman was approved as the buyer in November. Its partner in the deal was Spring Island developer Chaffin-Light.

The company's top executive, Stephen Navarro, said in a written statement that his group

Please see **PORT**, Page B3

"You're expecting Lucy to hold the football, and then at the last minute she pulls it away from you."

Sen. Tom Davis, R-Beaufort

Latest sale of Beaufort port falls through

Please see **PORT**, Page B1

was "still very interested in the unique opportunity to re-engage the Town of Port Royal with its waterfront by the development of this property. At such time as the authority seeks new offers, we intend to pursue a continuation of our efforts."

Davis, who has been fol-

lowing the sale closely, said the Furman-led group was a "bona-fide buyer."

"I hope they're still in the game," he said Monday. "They put a lot of work into this."

A bill that Davis co-wrote and that Haley signed into law in 2014 requires the former port be transferred to the S.C. General Services Division and put up for auction if a buyer isn't secured by June 30. In ei-

ther case, the property must be sold at least 80 percent of its appraised value. If auction prices don't meet the minimum, the land would go back on the open market.

The site was appraised at \$22.5 million in 2013.

Last year, a group sued the SPA, alleging Beaufort County and the town of Port Royal have lost more than \$7 million in property taxes while the

land remains in state hands. The lawsuit also said the failure to sell the property has hurt the local economy.

A hearing in the case is scheduled for Thursday in Beaufort County, SPA spokeswoman Erin Dhand said Monday. She said the authority believes the complaint is without merit.

Contact **John McDermott** at 937-5572.

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Size: 106.79 square inch
Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



FILE/BRAD NETTLES/STAFF

A ship delivers a load of cement to the Port of Port Royal in 2003, when the marine terminal was still open.

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FILE/AP

The State Ports Authority is having trouble selling its former Port Royal marine terminal near Beaufort.

Title: **Who holds real key to fixing our roads?**

Author:

Size: 55.49 square inch

Greenwood, SC Circulation: 16494



■ OUR VIEW

Who holds real key to fixing our roads?

As we zoom on down our roads and highways, the question arises: Who's zoomin' who here?

The critical condition of our roads, bridges and highways has been a frequent topic of news headlines and editorials. Lawmakers have touted about as many plans to raise revenue to fix a crumbling infrastructure system as there are roads in the state. Gasoline has been a bargaining chip. An increase in the tax has been woven into many plans and Gov. Nikki Haley initially threatened to veto any legislative plan that included a gas tax hike, holding close to her chest until after her reelection her own plan, which did include a hike in the gas tax coupled with a reduction in income taxes.

Well, here we are but weeks away from the end of the legislative session and what do we have? Nothing. There is no plan looming on the horizon, and it's not likely we'll see any plan that will gain the governor's signature. What to make of it all? As our infrastructure suffers, so too our economy suffers because current and potential businesses and industries are watching. All of us rely on our roads and highways, and certainly if they continue to crumble into disrepair some businesses might begin casting their eyes toward other states that offer a better highway system on which to transport goods.

Is the problem gamesmanship in the state Legislature, a bit of political one-upping? Is it the Department of Transportation that's the holdup? At least, that is, the idea of restructuring it or placing it under the governor's control? Is there even a revenue problem to begin with, as the DOT itself claims? In short, as we asked above,

who is zooming who here?

If essentially everyone — that's lawmakers, residents, business and industry operatives alike — agree our roads, bridges and highways are in dire need of repair, a point of agreement reached many months ago — then wouldn't it seem reasonable to believe that by now, and certainly before this legislative session ends, a plan would be held high and agreed upon?

Frankly, it is difficult to determine who holds the answers. Or, at least, who is telling the truth. The whole truth.

Plenty of power resides within the boundaries of Columbia where such decisions are reached. Often, those powers are at odds. They fight, they struggle. Some win, some lose. Some are driven by what brings about personal gain, others by what their constituency can gain.

The South Carolina Policy Council in February released its own take on why any progress on fixing our roads landed in an enormous pothole. The council, founded in 1986, touts itself as an "independent, private, non-partisan research organization to promote the principles of limited government, free enterprise and individual liberty and responsibility in the state of South Carolina."

On its website, <http://www.scpolicycouncil.org>, it suggests a rather alarming point from the git-go. There is no revenue shortage, the council contends. Rather, the problem is that the DOT and those who hold the strings of DOT operatives, funnel money into construction projects instead of maintenance. And they do so disproportionately by feeding the wants (not needs) of politically important counties.

Title: **Who holds real key to fixing our roads?**

Author:

Size: 55.49 square inch

Greenwood, SC Circulation: 16494

It also points to the structure of the DOT itself, noting that its eight-member commission includes only one governor appointee and seven that are elected by legislative delegations in each federal congressional district. Those are powerful seats, then, appointed by powerful people.

We are not saying the S.C. Policy Council's version of the truth is wholly correct. But the points they raise in their perspective on the situation are worthy of consideration. After all, South Carolina has never been immune to waste, and certainly it has often enough been the poster child of corruption (favoritism, if you'd prefer a more genteel and southern term).

Meanwhile, we continue to get zoomed, our roads continue to be doomed.

Title: **Post and Courier wins Pulitzer**
Author: By Jennifer Peltz Associated Press
Size: 14.41 square inch
Greenville, SC Circulation: 113473



Post and Courier wins Pulitzer

By Jennifer Peltz
Associated Press

NEW YORK — The Post and Courier of Charleston won the Pulitzer Prize for public service Monday for an examination of the deadly toll of domestic abuse, while The New York Times collected three awards and the Los Angeles Times two.

The series by the Post and Courier, entitled "Till Death Do Us Part," was praised by the Pulitzer judges on Monday

as a riveting series that looked at why South Carolina is among the most deadly states in the nation for women.

Following the publication of the series last summer, state lawmakers have introduced tough new penalties for abusers and Gov. Nikki Haley appointed a panel to further in-

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PULITZER

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investigate the issue.

Post and Courier Publisher P.J. Browning says the paper's staff was passionate about the project and passionate about the difference it could make in South Carolina.

The newspaper won a Pulitzer Prize 90 years

ago for editorial writing.

The Seattle Times staff took the breaking news award for its coverage of a mudslide that killed 43 people.

The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal both won investigative reporting prizes, the Times for an examination of lobbyists' influence on state attorneys general, the Journal for a project that shed new light on Medicare payments.

Title: 1.4 million reasons not to drill

Author:

Size: 51.61 square inch

Charleston, SC Circulation: 110289



Editorials

1.4 million reasons not to drill

Offshore drilling apologists say the industry is essentially spill free, but the truth is another thing altogether.

For example, a recent Associated Press investigation of an oil leak that has persisted for a decade off the coast of Louisiana, spilling up to 1.4 million gallons of oil, shows that data provided by the government cannot be trusted.

So the question for South Carolina is: Why in the world would anyone support offshore drilling that could well devastate the state's beautiful, healthy coast and the tourism that it depends on?

Gov. Nikki Haley and every member of the S.C. congressional delegation except 6th District Rep. James Clyburn have endorsed the federal government's plan to explore drilling off the state's coast. It's time for them to admit that they have made a mistake.

They should consider the story of the oil leak that occurred in 2005 when Hurricane Ivan's waves triggered an underwater landslide. It toppled Taylor Energy Company's platform and buried 28 wells about 10 miles off Louisiana's coast.

They are still leaking, and they're leaking at a rate that is six times greater than the Coast Guard had estimated and 20 times greater than Taylor's figures — information discovered by the AP in its investigation. The oil slick sheen seen from monitoring flights covers eight square miles.

And it's not the only one. The U.S. Coast Guard's National Response Center re-

ported that Louisiana in 2014 had over 3,000 reported oil spills with volumes ranging up to 11.8 million gallons. It estimates that 25 percent of oil spills are unreported.

Amazingly the government allows Taylor to shield spill-related information from public scrutiny, citing the need to protect trade secrets.

And Taylor is not even sharing information that could help other offshore operators prepare for a similar incident, saying the information is a proprietary asset.

South Carolinians should be wary of reassurances that drilling would not harm the environment. It should also be wary of promises of billions of new dollars and thousands of jobs for the state.

As state Sen. Chip Campsen, R-Charleston, wrote in a recent op-ed on our Commentary page:

"The land-based infrastructure necessary to support offshore drilling ... is not a pretty sight. It is extensive, dirty and highly industrial."

Where would that go on the South Carolina coast?

Clearly coastal South Carolina shouldn't be a sacrificial lamb.

On Thursday, Georgetown became the 50th coastal community to officially oppose offshore oil exploration and development off the East Coast. Mayor Jack Scoville said that "the risk to our citizens and our coast is not worth the slim possibility of reward."

Surely if offshore drilling would benefit citizens, Mayor Scoville would be

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supporting it. Twenty-one percent of the city's residents live below the poverty line. Further, 65 members of Congress and more than 160 conservation and animal welfare organizations are against offshore drilling.

Other communities standing in opposition include Charleston, Folly Beach, Hilton Head Island, Beaufort, Port Royal, the Isle of Palms, James Island, Sullivan's Island and Edisto Beach. Why would all those people oppose something that would benefit them? Because it won't.

Title: **Vote stuns supporters of more income tax relief**
 Author: By Jeffrey Collins Associated Press
 Size: 37.82 square inch
 Greenville, SC Circulation: 113473



Vote stuns supporters of more income tax relief

By Jeffrey Collins

Associated Press

COLUMBIA — After a bill to raise more money for South Carolina roads passed the House by a surprisingly big margin, Gov. Nikki Haley and others who want more tax relief or more reform of the agency that handles highway maintenance are trying to figure out their next step.

The bill passed 87-20 — well over the 82 votes needed to assure a two-thirds margin to override any potential veto. It will raise more than \$400 million extra yearly for roads by increasing taxes on fuel — an amount that rises if gas prices go up.

The bill also cuts the state income tax bill for most taxpayers by \$48 in two years and gives the governor the power to appoint all members of the Department of Transportation board and to continue to choose a chairwoman.

The bill now moves to the Senate, which has its own roads bill that raises more money — although not everything the DOT has said before that it needs — through a gas tax increase and a number of fees and currently has no income tax relief or DOT reform.

Groups like Americans for Prosperity, who want to see road funds spent smarter by abolishing the DOT's board before giving the agency any more money, were stunned at the large margin in the House, but vow to keep fighting in the Senate and pushing Haley to veto.

“On the sliding scale of disasters, the Senate bill is worse than the House bill,” said Dave Schwartz, state director of the limited government group.

Schwartz said his group will keep fighting. They held a Statehouse rally earlier this year and are already contacting senators.

But how much of a fight that will take place in the Senate still isn't known. Sen. Kevin Bryant, R-Anderson, said he and other conservative senators usually against additional spending are aware something must be done to get more money for roads, especially with the pressure being placed on lawmakers from businesses.

Bryant was hoping the House would help by starting with income tax relief closer to the \$1.8 billion Haley called for in her State of the State address instead of the \$51 million a year in the House bill.

“That's a big number,” Bryant said of the 87 votes in the House. “I was disappointed the number was so lopsided. I'd like to think we can get more income tax relief in there. Maybe it's something we can negotiate.”

But others outside of Bryant's most conservative group of senators seem less interested in a big income tax cut. Senate President Pro Tem Hugh Leatherman has said the state simply can't afford it and pay for better roads, a sentiment echoed Wednesday on the House floor by House Ways and Means

Chairman Brian White.

South Carolina should get more money as the state continues to grow. But some of that money has to be used for additional state employees to serve the new residents, rising health care costs and other expenses, said White, R-Anderson.

“There are a lot of uncertainties. We could have a hurricane — have to pay for that,” White said.

On her Facebook page, Haley posted the roll call for the House votes on roads, reminding her followers that she will veto the bill that passed. Along with the 87 yes votes, several Democratic lawmakers likely to support the proposal didn't vote Wednesday.

Haley's spokeswoman wouldn't specify exactly what the governor plans to do to try to get what she wants out of the Senate or a possible conference committee before the bill lands on her desk.

“The governor never misses an opportunity — whether it's on social media or in front of local civic groups like Rotary — to communicate directly with the people,” spokeswoman Chaney Adams said in a statement. “She has always valued that direct connection, she believes it's one of the most important parts of her job, and she'll continue to educate the people about what's going on in Columbia the rest of the legislative session.”