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Subject: Morning Clips – Thursday, January 16, 2014

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

The State: Exclusive: After decade of debate, lawmakers agree to restructure government

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/01/15/3209399/exclusive-after-decade-of-debate.html#storylink=cpy>

Adam Beam

House and Senate lawmakers have reached a deal to abolish the state Budget and Control Board, transferring most of the state's administrative duties to the governor's office in a major restructuring of state government. The deal, set to be signed Thursday morning by a legislative conference committee, still must be approved by the House and the Senate before it is sent to Republican Gov. Nikki Haley's desk. But leaders in both bodies say they have the votes to pass the bill, ending more than a decade of attempts to create a Department of Administration.

Note: "The push to create a Department of Administration has been a three-year fight and getting it over the finish line will be a tremendous win for the people of this state," Haley spokesman Doug Mayer said, referring to the Republican's time in office. "This is another example of South Carolina moving in the right direction."

The Item: School board members honored for their support

http://www.theitem.com/news/local_news/school-board-members-honored-for-their-support/article_a4cbf1f0-30e6-54bc-beed-a57bf88cf51c.html

Raytevia Evans

Sumter School District trustee Larry Addison was singled out Monday night and recognized for his efforts during the past decade for promoting and supporting public schools. The accolades from his fellow trustees, coming as the South Carolina School Board Association promotes its School Board Recognition Month, came at the board's meeting at Sumter High School.

Note: Baker said he hopes Gov. Nikki Haley's new education reform initiative will take shape and help him and the board continue to improve public education in the Sumter area.

Greenville News: Upstate hooks Bassmaster Classic again

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2014301160038>

Rudolph Bell

The Bassmaster Classic — known as the Super Bowl of bass fishing — will return to Lake Hartwell in 2015, according to an Anderson County official, in a development that's bound to put a smile on the faces of hoteliers and restaurateurs across the Upstate. Greenville and Anderson officials are set to join Gov. Nikki Haley at the Bon Secours Wellness Arena today to announce the televised tournament's return after a six-year absence, said Tommy Dunn, chairman of Anderson County Council.

2014 Campaign Cycle News:

Associated Press: Officials: Employee downloaded personal data

http://thetandd.com/news/state-and-regional/officials-employee-downloaded-personal-data/article_da7d5635-c9f3-5b0d-acc4-5f77c29e6d0c.html

Seanna Adcox

South Carolina's unemployment agency began notifying more than 4,600 people Wednesday that a former employee may have compromised their personal information. The employee who downloaded the data to a personal flash drive was fired Tuesday, said Adrienne Fairwell, spokeswoman for the Department of Employment and Workforce, or DEW.

Note: While Democrats have been critical of Haley's handling of the revenue hacking, the Republican governor's campaign criticizes her Democratic opponent, state Sen. Vincent Sheheen, for recommending Lykes for a promotion. Sheheen was among five Democratic legislators to write a recommendation in fall

2011 for a promotion Lykes didn't get.

Post and Courier: Rep. Patrick running for state superintendent

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20140115/PC1610/140119642/1031/rep-patrick-running-for-state-superintendent>

Cynthia Roldan

The race for schools superintendent heated up Wednesday after a second state representative announced he was getting involved. Republican Mick Zais, the state's current education superintendent, announced in December that he would not seek re-election to the post. State Rep. Andy Patrick, R-Beaufort, announced his candidacy on Wednesday, making him the fourth candidate hoping to take over the state's top education seat. The 44-year-old father of five said his passion for education makes him the perfect candidate for the job.

Opinion / Editorial Roundup:

Times and Democrat: Numbers show why teachers need support

http://thetandd.com/news/numbers-show-why-teachers-need-support/article_7a1546a2-7e29-11e3-b4d6-0019bb2963f4.html

Editorial

THE ISSUE: Teachers and turnover. OUR OPINION: S.C. must do better at keeping qualified instructors on the job. Gov. Nikki Haley recently became the latest to spotlight the lack of motivation there is for those who teach the state's children. The governor warned that the constant drumbeat of criticism of education — and she has been among the critics — has the effect of demoralizing teachers. By extension, demoralized people seek other job opportunities.

Index-Journal: Public education: Not just money

<http://www.indexjournal.com/Content/Opinion/Today-s-Editorial/Article/Public-education--Not-just-money/8/75/23066>

Editorial

South Carolina lawmakers returned to Columbia where they will begin hashing out Gov. Nikki Haley's 2014-15 budget, which includes a healthy education funding injection. This is an election year, so we all know what to expect. There will be plenty of partisan back-and-forth, especially in light of the fact Haley is facing an opponent, state Sen. Vincent Sheheen, in her re-election bid. While it is good to see the governor putting more emphasis on education funding, we recognize funds alone will not resolve the state's ranking among its counterparts in terms of education success rates.

Aiken Standard: Governor needs to be leader in conservation

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20140116/AIK0201/140119608/1021/AIK0201/editorial-governor-needs-to-be-leader-in-conservation>

Editorial

The governor can be a leading voice for protecting our state's natural resources. Unfortunately, that's not the case at the moment, according to a leading conservation group in South Carolina. Conservation Voters of South Carolina, a non-partisan environmental conservation group, recently graded S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley with a "D" for her efforts to protect the environment — explaining that the governor has displayed a striking lack of attention toward conservation efforts.

The State: Wilson v Harrell — or is that Harrell v Wilson?

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/01/15/3208792/scoppe-wilson-v-harrell-or-is.html#storylink=cpy>

Cindi Ross Scoppe

'Unprecedented' has become a far-too-familiar descriptor of the intersection of South Carolina's statewide elected officials and criminal law. There was that unprecedented indictment and conviction of a state constitutional officer (Charlie Sharpe, federal corruption charges), which was followed by a second one of each (Thomas Ravenel, federal drug charges). Then we had that unprecedented ethics fine against a governor (Mark Sanford), followed by an unprecedented decision by the attorney general to review, and agonize over, possible criminal charges against said governor.

Greenville News: Many still need jobless benefits

http://www.greenvilleonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2014301160010&gcheck=1&nclick_check=1

Editorial

Those in Congress seeking an argument to extend emergency unemployment benefits to some 1 million Americans who lost them on Dec. 28 need look only as far as the latest jobs report from the federal Department of Labor. On its face, the latest federal unemployment rate suggests continued recovery. The jobless rate has declined to 6.7 percent; it is the lowest rate since October 2008. During the last presidential election, 7 percent unemployment was considered a threshold by which the strength of the economic recovery could be judged.

Post and Courier: Obamacare's aging problem

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20140116/PC1002/140119590/1021/obamacare-x2019-s-aging-problem>

Editorial

President Barack Obama repeatedly told Americans that under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, "If you like your plan, you can keep it." But that wasn't the only dubious selling point for the landmark 2010 health care overhaul, which passed without a single Republican vote — and with 34 Democratic House members voting against it.

Legislative Session News:

Anderson Independent: Debate delays Senate vote on guns-in-bars bill

<http://www.independentmail.com/news/2014/jan/15/debate-delays-senate-vote-on-guns-in-bars-bill/?partner=RSS>

Kirk Brown

Debate delays Senate vote on guns-in-bars bill. An effort by South Carolina Senate Republicans to quickly pass a bill that would allow people with concealed-weapon permits to take firearms into bars and restaurants that sell alcohol was slowed by a pair of obstacles Wednesday. For the second consecutive day, Democratic senators spent hours voicing their concerns about the bill, which delayed a final vote on the measure.

McClatchy DC Bureau: US Sen. Tim Scott challenges both parties on poverty

<http://www.heraldonline.com/2014/01/15/5585173/us-sen-tim-scott-challenges-both.html#storylink=cpy>

James Rosen

U.S. Sen. Tim Scott, the only black Republican member of Congress, challenged conservatives and liberals alike Wednesday to use new tactics to help poor Americans. His impassioned appeal swung from offering his personal story to making a harsh political attack on the nation's first black president. Scott's speech on the Senate floor, coupled with his introduction of anti-poverty legislation, joined recent efforts by other prominent Republicans to counter President Barack Obama's recent focus on the growing wealth gap and to blunt his portrayals of their party as beholden to the rich.

The State: Potato farmers offer to cut river withdrawal

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/01/15/3209616/potato-farmers-offer-to-cut-river.html#storylink=cpy>

Sammy Fretwell

A Michigan potato farm company is offering to sharply reduce the amount of water it will siphon from the Edisto River's narrow South Fork under a compromise offered to opponents of the hefty withdrawals. Walther Farms would cut its withdrawals in half from one section of the South Fork and would abandon plans to take water from another part of the river several miles downstream, state Agriculture Commissioner Hugh Weathers said Wednesday.

Florence Morning News: Pee Dee legislators weigh benefits of ethics reform

http://www.scnow.com/news/politics/article_143769e4-7e4e-11e3-9053-001a4bcf6878.html

Gavin Jackson

There is no shortage of scandal in the Statehouse. In fact House Speaker Bobby Harrell is currently under investigation for ethics violations by a state grand jury, but insists it's a smear campaign. So how to fix a system, meant to oversee and punish lawmakers, but that can also be used as political weaponry? An independent committee? By appointment? Strengthen the State Ethics Commission, which has \$2.5 million in fines, some owed by local and state lawmakers still in office?

Aiken Standard: Proposed legislation could tighten water withdrawal laws

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20140116/AIK0101/140119602/proposed-legislation-could-tighten-water-withdrawal-laws>

Amy Banton

Conservationists have called for tighter laws when it comes to withdrawing water from South Carolina rivers, and it seems that state legislators have been listening. S.C. Sen. Chip Campsen, R-Charleston, is pitching a proposed bill that would require large agricultural businesses to file for a permit rather than a registration for water withdrawal, and he plans to introduce it this week. The bill was prompted by recent concerns about a large potato farm in Aiken County that wants to pull water from the South Edisto River.

S.C. Federal Delegation News:

Post and Courier: Sen. Tim Scott goes 'undercover' to gain job experience

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20140115/PC1610/140119605/1005/>

Schuyler Kropf

U.S. Sen. Tim Scott said he tried out a number of low-wage jobs to help collect experiences for his recently drafted economic empowerment reform package. Bagging groceries, waiting on tables, riding on a public bus through Charleston and sweeping the floor at a fast-food restaurant were all part of his low-key research, he said. "I learned I don't sweep as well as I need to," Scott, R-S.C., said Wednesday of his cleanup skills.

Index-Journal: Duncan pushes for seismic tests

<http://www.indexjournal.com/Content/Default/Homepage-Rotating-Articles/Article/Duncan-pushes-for-seismic-tests/-3/225/23084>

Chris Trainor

It's no secret Republican Third District U.S. Rep. Jeff Duncan is in favor of exploring the possibility of drilling off the coast of South Carolina. At a Congressional hearing last week, the representative continued to push for the seismic testing that would help determine where natural gas or oil resources are concentrated off the South Carolina coast. According to information provided by Duncan's staff, private estimates indicated there could be 3.5 million cubic feet of natural gas off the coast.

South Carolina News:

Greenville News: Critics blast DSS at hearing

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2014301160025>

Tim Smith

A grandmother tearfully recalled the day in November that her 5-year-old granddaughter was removed from her daughter's home after a state Department of Social Services worker falsely accused the child's father of molesting her. She told a panel of senators Wednesday that it took more than a month before the child was returned to the family and the accusation traced to a schoolyard rumor. She said the agency eventually ruled the allegation against the dad was unfounded and a DSS attorney apologized.

Post and Courier: Berkeley County student tests positive for tuberculosis

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20140115/PC16/140119614/1006/berkeley-county-student-tests-positive-for-tuberculosis>

Lauren Sausser

The state health department confirmed Wednesday that a Stratford High School student has contracted a case of tuberculosis, prompting more than 1,700 pre-recorded emergency calls to parents Wednesday afternoon. Letters also have been sent home with 152 students that the school believes may have had close contact with the patient. Parents are urged to have their children tested if they are concerned about a possible infection.

Associated Press: Zais seeks \$34M for buses, close of bonus program

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=K1t23tfW

Seanna Adcox

South Carolina's Superintendent of Education is requesting \$34 million for new school buses and asking lawmakers to close a teacher bonus program to new entries. Superintendent Mick Zais told a House budget-writing panel Wednesday that more than 60 percent of South Carolina's state-owned buses are over 15 years old. It would take \$34 million to comply with a 15-year replacement cycle law that legislators passed in 2007, then ignored amid the economic downturn.

Times and Democrat: Zais commends OCSD 3 efforts but says costs per student too high

<http://thetandd.com/news/zais-commends-ocsd-efforts-but-says-costs-per-student->

[too/article_3c29d0a8-7e36-11e3-9ac6-0019bb2963f4.html](http://www.wisconsinnewscenter.com/article_3c29d0a8-7e36-11e3-9ac6-0019bb2963f4.html)

Mary H. Yarborough

The state's education secretary liked what he heard from the Holly Hill-Roberts Middle School principal, but he said the school and Orangeburg Consolidated School District Three are spending too much per pupil. Education Secretary Mick Zais, who visited HH-RMS last week in his 235th stop on a statewide tour, said money does not equal improvement. Some of the state's poorest schools that also spend the least per student, "are knocking it out of the ballpark," he said.

Greenville News: State tries new methods to deal with doctor shortage

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2014301160024>

Liv Osby

In parts of South Carolina, a doctor can be as elusive as a Bluetick Coonhound with insomnia. Many counties — including Anderson, Oconee and Pickens — and parts of many others are designated health care provider shortage areas. And while there have been efforts to change that, progress is slow because it can take many years to produce a doctor, and there are only so many slots available in medical schools and hospital residencies needed to complete training.

Anderson Independent: Green Pond Landing will be ready for 2015 Bassmaster Classic, officials say

<http://www.independentmail.com/news/2014/jan/15/green-pond-landing-will-be-ready-for-2015-say/?partner=RSS>

Kirk Brown

The first round of improvements at Green Pond Landing should be completed in May, nine months before top anglers will gather there for the 2015 Bassmaster Classic, Anderson County officials said Wednesday. A three-lane boat ramp, a courtesy dock and parking spaces for 102 boat trailers and 150 cars are being constructed in the initial \$2.6 million phase of work at the new fishing event center on Hartwell Lake.

Local News:

Anderson Independent: School District 3 to contribute money for teen pregnancy program

<http://www.independentmail.com/news/2014/jan/15/school-district-3-to-contribute-money-for-teen/?partner=RSS>

Sarah Freishtat

Anderson School District 3 will begin contributing money to a teen pregnancy prevention program that United Way has long run for the district without cost. The organization asked the Iva-based district to pay \$2,500 toward the program, which costs about \$60,000 to operate, said Carol Burdette, president of United Way. The organization asked for the money to encourage district leaders to be invested in the program, Burdette said.

The Item: Housing market recovers in 2013

http://www.theitem.com/news/local_news/housing-market-recovers-in/article_4d991e4e-d35b-58a1-8bca-1b60851abbb1.html

Braden Bunch

The housing market in Sumter appears to have turned the proverbial corner. Home sales in Sumter climbed by more than 18 percent in 2013, according to figures released on Wednesday by the South Carolina Realtors. The increase, which was slightly better than the statewide average, meant about 200 more homes were sold in the area than were the year before. Because of this, the Sumter area saw, on average, about 24 homes sold every week.

Florence Morning News: Three judges added to Florence's new livability court

http://www.scnow.com/news/politics/article_dca08a88-7e52-11e3-b8e1-001a4bcf6878.html

Traci Bridges

Three local attorneys were sworn in as municipal judges Wednesday as the city of Florence continues an expansion of its court system. Rangeley Bailey, Edgar "Lloyd" Willcox II and Nicholas W. Lewis were selected for the three new judgeships established for a livability court, which will focus on codes enforcement and nuisance complaints in neighborhoods.

National News:

Associated Press: Cybersecurity chief had qualms over health website

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268798/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=6NCbTISS

Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar

The top cybersecurity officer for the Health and Human Services Department said he was concerned about potential vulnerabilities ahead of the launch of the Obama administration's health care website. But Kevin Charest told congressional investigators he was unable to get answers to his questions from others inside the department. He concluded that the testing of the site was substandard. "I would say that it didn't follow best practices," Charest testified a Jan. 8 deposition. Excerpts of his testimony were provided to The Associated Press by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

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