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Monday, November 21, 2016

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Charleston, S.C. \$1.00

Defense: Case a matter of perspective

Attorneys for Michael Slager want jury to see shooting through eyes of an experienced officer

BY ANDREW KNAPP
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The attorneys defending Michael Slager already have tried to show jurors that the police officer's decision to shoot Walter Scott was, at some point in a confrontation between them, justified.

Their task this week in Slager's murder trial is to convey that he should not have been expected to change his mind in the 15 seconds between the moment Scott turned to run and the officer's first gunshot.

Lead defense attorney Andy Savage gave a preview of that argument last

week when he fruitlessly asked the presiding judge to toss out the case after prosecutors finished their testimony.

"It cannot be viewed the same as a Saturday night killing, a typical murder case," Savage said in pleading with the judge. "One must look at it through the experience of a police officer ... im-

mediately prior to the shooting."

But that task will be tall as the defense continues calling witnesses, including laboratory experts and Slager's former co-workers at the North Charleston Police Department. The defense testimony

Please see **SLAGER**, Page A5



Inside
A look back at Week 3 of Michael Slager's murder trial. A5

'Providing the little things'



BRAD HERTEL/STAFF

In an effort to help feed those in need this holiday season, Molina Healthcare of South Carolina partnered with Food Lion and Seventh-Day Adventist Church to distribute 400 reusable grocery bags filled with Thanksgiving-related food items Sunday at the church on Dorchester Road in North Charleston. "It's really special because we often forget that some people don't always have what they need," said volunteer Kathleen Booras. "Providing the little things we often take for granted is a reminder of what we should be doing to help each other." Story on Page A3

Births in S.C. still short of '07 levels

Economic recovery, declining fertility rates among factors

BY LAUREN SAUSSER
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An October report by state health officials shows more than 58,000 babies were born in South Carolina last year, but the total still falls thousands short of pre-recession levels, raising questions about economic recovery and long-term fertility rates.

By comparison, nearly 63,000 infants were born in the state in 2007.

Experts say many factors contributed to the trend but that it primarily may be traced to the fact women are waiting longer to start families.

Numbers reported by the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control bear this out.

In 1990, 17,900 women ages 20-24 gave birth in South Carolina. By 2015, the number within that age group dropped to 14,796. Likewise in 1990, fewer than 10,000 women ages 30-34 gave birth. Last year the number increased to 14,169.

"This is not unique to South Carolina or even the United States," said Robert Hartwig, a University of South Carolina economist. "This is a global phenomenon."

He explained declining fertility rates actually pre-date the recession. The economic downturn in 2003 accelerated the trend.

"This recession was so deep and, for many people, impacted them for so long ... it has always been the case that a major driver of fertility is the economics of the family," he said. "In theory (the recession) ended in 2009 but most people didn't feel that way, so everything was postponed."

Caroline Larrinet is a demographer at the University of South Carolina and an expert on fertility rates. She said lower fertility rates are a maze of

Please see **BIRTHS**, Page A5

Schools report card: Progress amid disparity

State Department of Education data shows richest, poorest Lowcountry schools in Charleston County

BY DEANNA PAN
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The state Department of Education released the 2016 district report cards last week, accountability tools designed to show how individual schools and districts are making progress on indicators like standardized test scores and graduation rates. They also reveal significant disparities between wealthy and poor schools, and white

and black students, across the Lowcountry, particularly in Charleston County. Here are a few important findings from the data:

Charleston County Schools have the highest — and lowest — rates of poverty
No school district in the Lowcountry is as economically segregated as Charleston County

Please see **SCHOOLS**, Page A4

Richest, poorest schools

Five poorest schools	Poverty index
Chicora Elementary	96.32
Mary Sara Elementary	95.85
Spartanburg-Brickley Middle	95.65
Greg Mathis Charter High	95.65
Mitchell Elementary	94.94

Five richest schools	Poverty index
Academic Magnet High	5.41
East Cooper Montessori Charter	8.22
BUNA Academy	11.23
Sullivan's Island Elementary	11.44
Charles Brickley Elementary	15.51

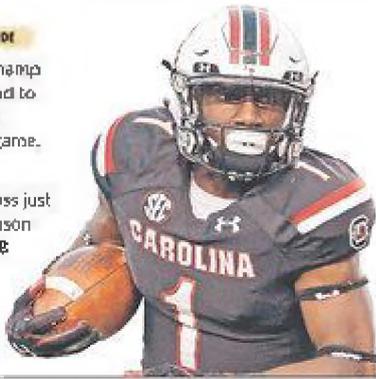
Inside



MORE INSIDE

Will Muschamp looks ahead to Saturday's Clemson game. **1B**

Was Pitt loss just what Clemson needed? **1B**



Which bowl game for Gamecocks?

BY JOSH KENDALL
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South Carolina is headed to a bowl game. That much was learned Saturday evening when the Gamecocks beat Western Carolina 44-31 in Williams-Brice Stadium to earn their sixth victory of the season and the postseason eligibility that goes along with that threshold.

Now, the question is: Where? The Southeastern Conference has tie-ins with 10 bowl games, and also is expected to earn one spot in the College Football Playoff. The playoff spot, likely in the Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl, is expected to be taken by Alabama, which is a three-touchdown favorite over Florida in the SEC Championship Game, which will be played Dec. 3 in Atlanta. In non-playoff bowl games, the

possible destinations for an SEC team range from the Sugar Bowl in New Orleans at the top of the prestige scale to the Independence Bowl in Shreveport, La., at the bottom.

At the moment, the Gamecocks are near the bottom of that scale, meaning the Independence Bowl, the Birmingham (Ala.) Bowl, the Liberty Bowl in Memphis, Tenn.,

SEE BOWL, 7A

MONDAY NOVEMBER 21 2016

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YESTERDAY, 16-19 30% PRECIP. (as of 5pm) 10°
FORECAST, 6C

The State

CASE INVOLVES IRMO CLINIC

Feds: Cut embezzler's sentence

First, federal prosecutors gave embezzler Chandra Padgett a 7-year prison sentence. Now they want to give her a break.

BY JAMES ALONX
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Federal prosecutors are moving to lop a year off the seven-year sentence now being served by an Irmo embezzler who stole some \$1.9 million from the

clinic where she worked.

In legal papers filed in federal court, acting U.S. Attorney Beth Drake said Chandra Padgett had provided "valuable, substantial and unrewarded" cooperation in helping the government take steps to recover money from the same Irmo clinic where she worked for years before her 2014 arrest by federal agents.

Currently, Padgett, 48, is serving her sentence at Alderson federal prison in West Virginia. She is scheduled for release in

September 2020. But if the government's request is granted, Padgett will be freed a year early.

It will be up to U.S. Judge Joe Anderson to decide whether to grant the government's motion.

Drake and assistant U.S. attorney DeWayne Pearson told the judge that Padgett had provided information indicating that Advanced Pain Therapies, the clinic from which she had stolen nearly \$2 million, "had engaged in systemic over-

billing to Medicaid," the government lawyers said in the motion.

Although prosecutors declined to charge the clinic with a criminal violation, Padgett's information proved helpful, according to the motion, which did not say exactly how, if any, money was recovered.

During her years at the clinic, Padgett was an accountant, office manager and billing coordinator. The clinic took in hundreds of thousands of Medicaid dollars each year.

She embezzled the money in two major ways, according to evidence in the case, Padgett submitted false invoices from a shell company she created and controlled. She also increased her salary without authorization, prosecutors said.

Alderson is a minimum-security prison for women. Its celebrity inmates have included businesswoman Martha Stewart. Stewart served five months there for obstruction of justice in an insider trading deal.



S.C. Department of Transportation employee Danny Speaks Jr. drags a dead deer to his truck along I-20.



PALMETTO VOICES
PROTECT ANIMALS FROM ABUSE

In the wake of an awful case in Harbison, Palmetto Eufeline's Denise Wilkinson urges new laws, new focus to prevent animal abuse. **1C**



COLLEGE SOCCER
USC FALLS TO CLEMSON IN OT

Clemson, the No. 3 national seed in NCAA Tournament, defeats USC to move on. **1B**

Dead deer in the highway? They call that a 10-45



SPORTS, 1C
**JOHNSON
WINS TITLE**



METRO, 3A
**Ice on Main
opens its
6th season**

The Greenville News PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

MONDAY,
NOVEMBER 23, 2016
GREENVILLEONLINE.COM

USA TODAY HEALTH CHOICES GETTING TOUGHER PAGE 1B

COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN



Construction at the Tri-County Tech Student Success Center started over the summer.

PAUL BROWN

Dysfunctional institutional relationship, ill will marred dispute between Pickens County, Tri-County Tech

RON BARNETT
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Pickens County Council is now in possession of more than 250 pages of detailed architectural drawings and nearly 1,500 pages of specifications related to the construction of the Tri-County Technical College Student Success Center — a project the council refused to approve because it said it didn't have enough information.

The voluminous cache of highly technical documents wasn't available even to Tri-County Tech until a month and a half after the new fiscal year began July 1 — the date by which all three counties were expected to have approved funding for the work.

The story of how construction of the first new building on Tech's main campus in two decades came to be without the support of one of the three counties is a study in dysfunctional institutional

Tech had funds to begin the project without Pickens County's support but will need the money during the next fiscal year.

relationship, lack of communication and mistrust that likely played a role in the shakeup of a County Council that soon will have four new members and a clear majority who support the \$42 million project.

Construction started over the summer on the building that will provide space for students who have gotten used to studying in hallways. Anderson and Oconee counties made good on pledges for their portion of the \$27 million the three counties were asked to come up with. Anderson is responsible for \$13.5 million in bonds and Oconee \$6.75 million. Tech is chipping in \$15 million.

Pickens County's share would come out of the pockets of Tech students who live in Pickens County in the form of a surcharge added to their tuition, if the county doesn't come through with the

See TECH, Page 9A

Wildfire sparks a new hot spot

MICHAEL BURNS
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Officials battling the largest wildfire in the South Carolina mountains in modern history counted their blessings Sunday after weathering without incident the winds that brought risk to life and property.

The wildfire breached a fire line over the weekend and a new hot spot of about 38 acres sprang to the top of Rocky Mountain, west of Table Rock Reservoir and on the northern side of the wildfire's patchwork of torched ground. Helicopters dropped water to douse the flames Sunday as crews on the ground worked to reach the rugged, steep terrain.

"Of all places, that is the best place for us," said Holly Welch, spokeswoman for the state Forestry Commission. "The terrain is rough, but as far as danger to people or property, there is nothing up there."

The wildfire remained about 35 percent contained Sunday after having burned 5,177 acres of Jessesee Gorges wilderness, Table Rock State Park and Greenville Water System watershed land.

Two National Guard helicopters remained active as another was on the way to the scene. They were more active than ever Saturday, dropping 203,840 gallons of water to push the total to 997,840 gallons dropped since the fire started more than 10 days ago.

About 300 men and women from dozens of agencies across the state have gathered to fight the fire, one of many across a region that's been parched by drought.

An evacuation order for about 100 peo-

See HOT SPOT, Page 5A



MICHAEL BURNS

A new hot spot at the wildfire that started on Pinnacle Mountain sends smoke into the atmosphere Sunday.

Transgender issue surfaces at Pickens school

Officials ask student not to use boys' bathroom

RON BARNETT
RBARNETT@GRIFFINONLINE.COM

Pickens County school officials asked a transgender student at the district's Career & Technology Center not to use the boys' bathroom, according to a statement from the school district and a police report — in apparent violation of federal guidelines that say transgen-

dering schools after an alleged altercation with a deputy over the bathroom issue, according to an incident report and tickets issued in the case.

Evans is listed as female on the incident report.

The school district said the arrest stemmed from a confrontation between the student and the school resource officer, not the student's use of the boys' bathroom.

"We recognize that this incident touches on ongoing national conversations about the rights of transgender

student's attempt to use a male restroom.

"The student was arrested solely for assaulting and threatening an officer during an altercation which the student appeared to initiate."

Evans didn't respond to repeated requests to speak to the newspaper about the case. Evans is represented by the 13th Circuit Public Defender's Office, according to the Pickens County Magistrate's Office. The Public Defender's Office said it couldn't comment on the case or confirm any client's identity.

in May saying that under Title IX, which bans discrimination based on gender, schools that receive federal funding must treat transgender students the same as other students of the gender with which they identify.

"A school may provide separate facilities on the basis of sex, but must allow transgender students access to such facilities consistent with their gender identity," the letter says. "A school may not require transgender students to use facilities inconsistent with their gender identity or to use individual-user facil-



JOHNSON WINS SPRINT CUP TITLE

SPORTS, B1



WOFFORD MAKES PLAYOFFS

SPORTS, B1

Herald-Journal

SPARTANBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA

Monday, November 21, 2016



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58°/27° 50°/31° 50°/44°

Complete forecast, A10

NEWS DIGEST

USC senior named Rhodes Scholar

COLUMBIA — A senior at the University of South Carolina is among the 32 American men and women chosen as Rhodes Scholars.

Among the 2017 recipients announced Sunday is Jory M. Fleming, who is double-majoring in geography and marine science.

Fleming's biography lists his interests as three-dimensional mapping and data visualizations related to sea level rise, aquatic habitat, and underwater archaeology. He has worked on funded research projects for NOAA, the National Park Service, and National Geographic.

He has a perfect academic record and has received numerous fellowships and awards, including the Truman Scholarship and the Goldwater Scholarship. His extracurricular interests include training service dogs, volunteering for a child literacy program, and church activities.

At Oxford, Fleming will pursue a master of philosophy degree in geography and the environment.

High winds hamper firefighting efforts

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Dry conditions accompanied by high winds are continuing to hamper efforts to control wildfires across western North Carolina.

Although a cold front passed through the state on Saturday, there was no precipitation to help firefighters.

The U.S. Forest Service reports the Party Rock fire in the Lake Lure area is only 36 percent contained. Officials say the fire didn't grow despite the wind, but firefighters will have to keep an eye on it. The Party Rock fire has consumed 7,171 acres with nearly 1,000 firefighters working the blaze.

Officials say high winds and low humidity are also impacting the Chestnut Knob fire, which is 40 percent contained after consuming 6,426 acres.

TRANSITION MEETINGS

Trump and his team push ahead

By Sari Horwitz
The Washington Post

President-elect Donald Trump and his transition team were moving full steam ahead Sunday on building his administration with meetings scheduled all afternoon with political allies and business leaders at Trump National Golf Club in Bedminster, New Jersey. Those on the meeting list included New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, former New York mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani and Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach.

Trump spokesman Jason Miller said "there definitely is a possibility" that more Cabinet

announcements could be made Sunday and Monday.

When Trump returned from Lannington Presbyterian Church at about noon Sunday, he told reporters that new appointments "could very well happen" today.

"We're going to have a great day," Trump said. "Great people coming. You'll see. Great people."

On CBS' "Face the Nation," Vice President-elect Mike Pence said that former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney is under "active and serious consideration to serve as secretary of state."

Trump met for more than an



President-elect Donald Trump, left, waves to the media as New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie arrives at the Trump National Golf Club Bedminster clubhouse Sunday in Bedminster, N.J. CAROLYN KASTER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEE TRANSITION, A9

RAIL TRAIL



Lynnan Town Councilman Larry Chappell talks about a possible new trail and the benefits he hopes it will bring. JOHN BYRUM/SPARTANBURG HERALD-JOURNAL

Paths to new business

By Chris Lavender
chris.lavender@shj.com

For Monty Mullen, walking the Mary

can see anybody on it."

The success of rail trails such as the ones in Spartanburg and Greenville has other cities in the Upstate looking

next summer and construct a concrete walkway leading to his business. Morrow said brush already has been removed from the area behind the restaurant so



ESCAPE

Alex Hapki scored the game-winning goal in OT as Clemson eliminated USC in the NCAA Tournament. **1B**

Independent Mail

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2016

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MICHAEL BURNS/USA TODAY NETWORK

A new hot spot at the wildfire that began on Pinnacle Mountain, seen from Caesars Head State Park, sends smoke into the atmosphere Sunday.

NEW HOT SPOT EMERGES TO TRIGGER EVACUATIONS

Cautionary order for 86 homes in path of fire extended till noon

MICHAEL BURNS
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Officials battling the largest wildfire in the South Carolina mountains in modern history counted their blessings Sunday after weathering without incident the winds that brought risk to life and property.

The wildfire breached a fire line over the weekend and a new hot spot of about 38 acres spread to the top of Rocky Mountain, west of Table Rock Reservoir



For continuing coverage, visit independentmail.com

and on the northern side of the wildfire's patchwork of torched ground.

Helicopters dropped water to douse the flames Sunday as crews on the ground worked to reach the rugged, steep terrain.

"Of all places, that is the best place for us," said Holly Welch, spokeswoman for the state Forestry Commission. "The terrain is rough, but as far as danger to people or property, there is nothing up there."

The wildfire remained about 35-percent contained Sunday after having burned 5,177 acres of Jocassee Gorges

wilderness, Table Rock State Park and Greenville Water System watershed land.

Two National Guard helicopters remained active as another was on the way to the scene. They were more active than ever Saturday, dropping 203,890 gallons of water to push the total to 997,840 gallons dropped since the fire started more than 10 days ago.

About 310 men and women from dozens of agencies across the state have gathered to fight the fire, one of many across a region that's been parched by drought.

An evacuation order for about 100 people in 86 homes in a small section east of Table Rock State Park was extended

See **HOT SPOT**, Page 6A

Turkey shoot targets donors

Goal is to benefit Belton Area Museum Association

MIKE EADS
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BELTON - The Belton Area Museum Association tried a fundraising idea Sunday that was so old that it was new to many participants.

The second annual BAMA Turkey Shoot fundraiser drew marksmen of all ages and backgrounds Sunday afternoon to the Belton home of David and Debbie Jones, who offered their land for the event. Adam Pinley of Doc's Tactical Supply in Belton provided three .22-gauge rifles for competitors to choose from, and the museum association sold targets for them to shoot at.

The final tally from the shooting contest and food sales wasn't available Sunday evening, but Museum Director Abigail Burden was pleased with the turnout.

"We're hoping to do this every year," said Burden, who took over the museum in late spring. "We were looking for a fundraiser that was something different."

Turkey shoots used to be a staple of late autumn across South Carolina and the United States, but their popularity waned over the last few decades for some reason. There were plenty of hunters and sportsmen of all ages, however, competing Sunday.

James Bright enjoys hunting for ducks, deer, squirrels and turkeys with his father, Belton City Councilman Jim Bright. So far this year, however, all the Belton Middle School sev-

See **SHOOT**, Page 4A



MIKE EADS/INDEPENDENT MAIL
David Kelly of Anderson takes his shot Sunday at a turkey shoot in Belton.

Trump children's roles blur line between transition, company



JONATHAN LEMIRE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK - Nearly every morning since their father's stunning victory at Election Day, three of Donald Trump's grown children walk through the Trump Tower lobby and board an elevator. But are Don Jr., Ivanka and Eric going to the campaign office on the fifth floor? Their

interest between Trump's White House and his sprawling business interests.

The children are poised to wield incredible influence over their father, even if they don't follow him to Washington. Trump said consistently during the campaign that if he won, those children would stay in New York and run his business. But the three — plus Ivanka's husband, Jared Kushner — were all named

SPORTS

Clemson back on track, wins ACC title 10



SPORTS

ETSU hands Winthrop third straight loss 10



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\$1.00

Sunny 56°/38° See 8A

The Herald



TRACY LABALL / HERALD-ONLINE.COM
Chester County Coroner Terry Tinker paints a cross on Saluda Road north of Chester.

CHESTER COUNTY

Crosses mark fatal crashes

BY TRACY LABALL
tlaball@heraldonline.com

CHESTER
Shards of plastic and tiny fragments of glass still litter the charred roadside of S.C. 72 near Enix Road, just a few miles outside the Chester city limits.

Wind, weather and lawn maintenance will eventually disperse the remnants of the head-on crash that killed three people last month. But Chester County Coroner Terry Tinker wants people who drive by to remember that three lives ended in that spot.

That's why Tinker, along with local first responders and the S.C. Highway Patrol, painted three white crosses last week on the edge of the road where Anthony "Tony" Roof, Willie Perry and Sa Lawrence Dandy died in the early hours of Oct. 23.

"We want the families to know that those three crosses represent their family and that they're not forgotten," Tinker said as traffic whizzed past the freshly painted crosses last week. "But we don't want to have to paint another cross."

From now on, the coroner's office will paint a white cross where someone dies on a county roadway. The new initiative comes as Chester County — having already exceeded its 2015 traffic fatality total — heads into the busiest travel holidays of the year. There were 16 fatalities last year, and so far this year 17 people have died on Chester County roadways.

"We've still got six more weeks of 2016 left," Tinker said.

SEE CROSSES, 4A

YORK COUNTY

What does \$10M buy in courthouse renovations?



PHOTOS BY TRACY LABALL / HERALD-ONLINE.COM

The main courtroom has seen the most change among all the renovations at the York County Courthouse. The venue for civil trials has refurbished wood floors, a cathedral-style ceiling and a new sprinkler system. The courthouse is set to reopen sometime in December.

BY DAVID THACKERMAN
dthackerman@heraldonline.com

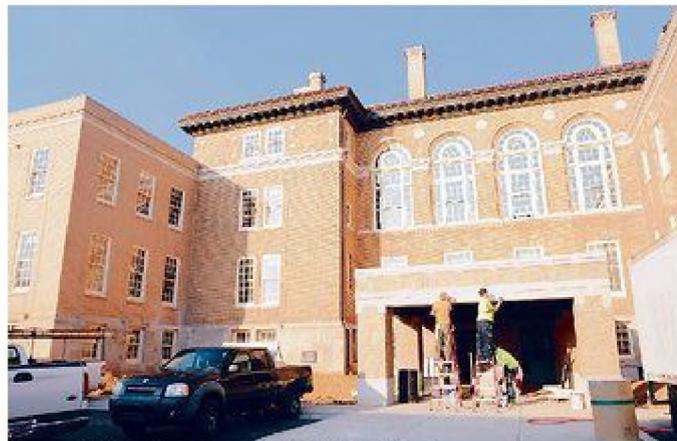
YORK
Kirk Droom says, in about a month, the long task of bringing the 102-year-old York County Courthouse into the 21st century will be completed. It's taken several years, about \$10 million in taxpayer money, countless working hours and buckets of elbow grease.

"I hope I can start sleeping at night," he said, with a smile.

Spirits were high in downtown York earlier this week for Brown, the on-site manager for Gunning Construction Management, and his crew as they began to put the finishing touches on a long-stalled renovation.

At least 75 to 100 workers from his team and from Leitner Construction Co. of Rock Hill have put in shifts each weekday for the past two years. There's no hard re-opening date as yet (estimates are mid to late December), but workers say they feel confident the public will be proud of the work.

After spending a stretch as the home of a hodge-podge of different uses, such as a tax assessor's



A crew works Wednesday on the exterior of the York County Courthouse.

office and register of deeds office, the courthouse needs to be just a courthouse again, said chief deputy clerk of court Angie Smart.

"All of the people who worked here before are so excited about

the new facility," Smart said. "It's great for the staff and the community. It's been a long time coming for everyone involved."

The main courtroom itself has experienced the most visible facelift. The renovated space features

refurbished wood floors, a cathedral-style ceiling, and a brand new sprinkler system. There are two smaller courtrooms down stairs, one for

SEE COURTHOUSE, 4A

HANDLING GRIEF DURING HOLIDAYS

How to get through holidays after losing a loved one, 1B



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'Celebrating in a major way'

First service held Sunday at rebuilt Glover Grove

BY DEDE BILES
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WARRENVILLE — The Rev. Michelle Bush urged everyone not to hold back while making a joyful noise unto the Lord during the first service in the newly rebuilt Glover Grove Missionary Baptist Church on Sunday.

"Nobody throws a party like God's people can throw a party, and this afternoon is all about celebrating in a major way," Bush declared. "I don't sit back and don't relax. Continue to tap your feet, continue to throw up glad hands and continue to shout so that the angels in heaven will be jealous about what is here on Earth."

The Rev. Bobby Jones is the pastor of Glover Grove, but in her role as worship leader, it was Bush's job to set the tone for the festive occasion.

The singing was enthusiastic, and the clapping was loud.

"God is alive and well," Jones said. Fire destroyed Glover Grove in June 2015, but religious and community leaders such as John Lind, the Rev. Bob Byrne and the Rev. Grand Willeson banded together to raise money so that it could rise from the ashes.

"God used this church as a springboard for unity," Jones said. "God has performed some miracles in our lives, and I want to thank all of the folks who also have been involved in this."

The Rev. Paul Bush, president of the Concerned Ministers Fellowship and the husband of Michelle



STAFF PHOTO BY DEDE BILES

Lois Jones, right foreground, sings during the first service at the newly rebuilt Glover Grove Missionary Baptist Church in Warrentonville on Sunday.

Bush, composed Glover Grove to the burning bush to the Bible. Fire didn't consume the husband, and it also didn't entirely consume Glover Grove.

A cross on top of the church survived, and it's displayed on the front of the new brick building.

Paul Bush talked about how God used the burning bush to communicate with Moses and how God used the fire at Glover Grove to unite people of different races and religions in the effort to restore the church.

Officially, the cause of the blaze was undetermined, but Bush said that he believed "it was the hand of the Lord. He knew what He had to allow happen in order to bring us to this moment on this day."

Please see CELEBRATING, Page 10A.



STAFF PHOTO BY DEDE BILES

The Rev. Paul Bush, left foreground, and the Rev. Sotello Long, right foreground, carry a banner as the From Forgiveness to New Life Walkends at Glover Grove Missionary Baptist Church in Warrentonville on Sunday. The first service was held in the newly rebuilt church, which was destroyed by fire in June 2015. Also pictured is Glover Grove's pastor, the Rev. Bobby Jones, second from right.

Overtime rule would impact Aiken County employees

BY CHRISTINA CLEVELAND
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Employers across the U.S. are currently figuring out how to comply with a new federal overtime rule set to go into effect Dec. 1.

In Aiken County, 72 County government employees would be impacted by the Department of Labor's new rule, which changes the salary threshold for overtime pay.



Walman

The new rule will raise the salary threshold from \$455/week to \$913, or \$3,756, the federal agency says on its website. This, it says, will ensure protections to 4.2 million workers across the country and update what it calls out-of-date overtime regulations for white-collar workers.

It also will automatically update the salary threshold every three years, based on wage growth over time, the website states.

In response to the rule, the Department of Labor says employers can pay time-and-a-half for overtime, raise workers' salaries above the new threshold, limit workers' hours to 40 hours a week or some combination of the aforementioned.

Overtime pay for hourly workers is exempt at a rate of 1 1/2 times the hourly wage, or time-and-a-half, for every hour over 40 hours in a single workweek.

For salary workers, that rate would be based off their hourly wage equivalent for a 40-hour week. Under current regulations, salaried workers earning more than \$23,660 per year aren't eligible for overtime pay.

Opponents of the new rule say the rule could result in cuts or layoffs or increase budgetary costs for municipal governments and other industries and small businesses.

A lawsuit filed by 21 states, including South Carolina, against the federal agency is seeking an injunction, which could delay when the law goes into effect.

Please see OVERTIME, Page 10A.

Area deaths

John Baldwin, Aiken
Joyce Lynn Beasley, Clerks Hill
Neil McClintock, Aiken
Sandra Muns, Jackson
Tracy Jenkins Sr., Williston

Deaths and Funerals, 4A

Weather

City of Aiken to review comprehensive plan

BY DAN BROWN
dbrown@aikenstandard.com

The City of Aiken has a plan as it moves forward into the future.

The Aiken Planning Commission forwarded its comprehensive plan to Aiken City Council for review and

process.

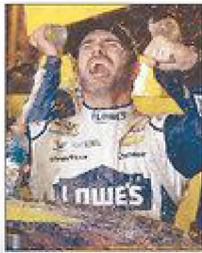
The City of Aiken's Comprehensive Plan serves as the foundational document that guides all aspects of the ongoing growth and development of the city, according to Planning Commission documents.

The first draft of the comprehensive

plan was presented to the Planning Commission Chairperson, Lisa Stewart, who was proud of the product her team created and said the process was a true community effort.

"Our public information meetings over the last six months of the review process were well attended

and well received," Stewart said. "I was very proud of the collective effort from the Planning Commission, the Aiken Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Aiken and the Aiken community for their contributions to the comprehensive plan update. This is not our comprehensive plan. This belongs to the public."



SPORTS Jimmie Johnson seizes record-tying 7th NASCAR championship. **Page 1C**

Morning News

MONDAY NOVEMBER 21, 2016

TODAY'S WEATHER

Freshly of sun, chilly later.
High 61, low 29.
DETAILS 2A

www.snow.com

The Voice of the Pee Dee

75 cents

'Flex' offers help to Hartsville children

BY **JARIE ARMISTON**
Hartsville Messenger
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HARTSVILLE — Hartsville native John "Flex" Johnson has returned home and wants to make a difference in his community and the lives of its youths. A helping hand, a ray of hope is what he wants to give the young people in the community.

He said he is establishing his own organization called Flex Games — HOPE — Helping Out People Everywhere.

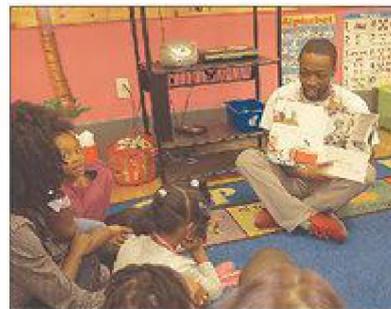
He has already reached out to Mary Abraham's classroom at Thornwell School for the Arts, where he reads to her students. He said she is his



Second in a series on volunteers

▶ **TODAY:** John Johnson volunteers at Semaj Enterprises LLC After-school Learning Center in downtown Hartsville.
▶ **GET INVOLVED:** To learn more about volunteer opportunities at Semaj Enterprises LLC After-school Learning Center, call 843-339-0442.

▶ **COMING TUESDAY:** Through the Well, his Pamplico-based church, Hartwell Pamplico High School running back/defensive back John Murtha has assisted Hurricane Matthew victims.



John Johnson takes time out of his day to read to children in the after-school program at Semaj Enterprises LLC After-school Learning Center in downtown Hartsville.

See **HOPE**, Page 3A

PHOTO BY JESSICA WILSON FOR THE NEWS

Salvation Army

Nonprofit to help families in need for Christmas

From staff reports

FLORENCE — Christmastime is near, and the Salvation Army of the Pee Dee is looking to assist at least 671 children who are in need this year through its Empty Stocking Fund.

The Morning News once again is assisting the army in this year's efforts by getting the word out about the fund in order to help families this holiday season.

Last year, more than 200 families received bags of gifts for Christmas thanks to the Salvation Army and the hundreds of toy donations provided by members of the community.

The charity's goal this year is to raise \$60,000 to provide food, toys and other presents to the families that successfully completed the application process.

"We'd love to reach that amount, because the money raised will be to provide Christmas dinner as well as Christmas gifts — toys, bikes, clothes, whatever the need is for a family," Maj. Lynda Thornhill said. "Reaching that amount is going to make that possible."

The goal last year also was \$60,000. Ultimately, the Salvation Army raised \$62,000.

The 2016 fund drive will start

See **STOCKING**, Page 3A

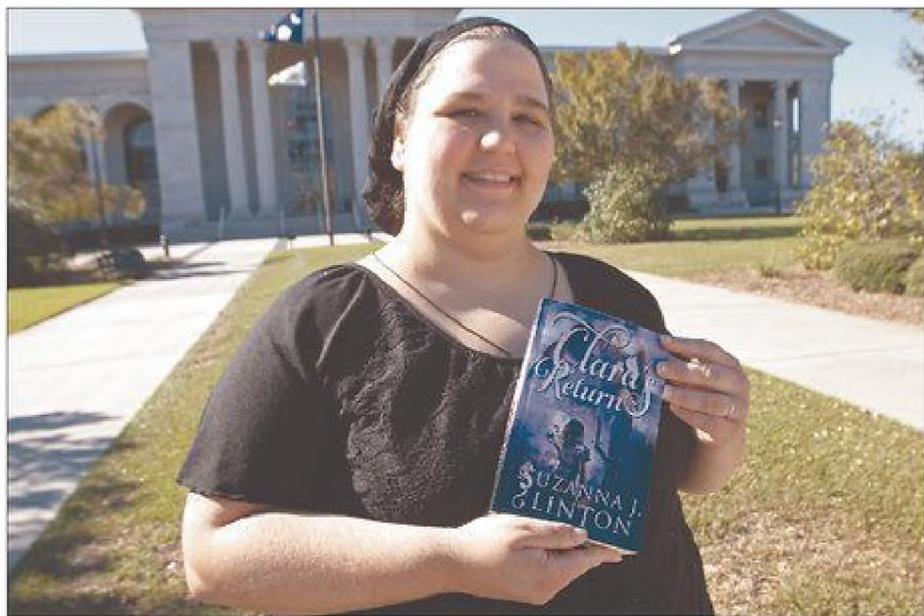
WANT TO HELP?

▶ **Donations:** Monetary donations and toys for the Empty Stocking Fund can be brought now until Christmas Day to the Salvation Army at 2210 Hoffmeyer Road or after Nov. 28, to the Salvation Army's Christmas Center at 1511 S. Iby St. Toys should be unwrapped so the type and age appropriateness can be verified. Checks should be made payable to the Salvation Army, with



Each Monday, the Morning News features a good news story on a person, place or organization in the Pee Dee. If you have a suggestion for someone or something to profile, send it to news@snow.com.

Making daydreams come true



JESSICA WILSON FOR THE NEWS

Francis Marion University graduate and Holly Hill native Suzanna Kinton held a book signing Saturday at Barnes & Noble for her newest fantasy novel, "Clara's Return." She has self-published three novels in less than three years.

Indie author, FMU grad finds success in fiction writing

BY **JESSICA WILSON**
Morning News
jwilson@hollivillemessengers.com

Saturday at Barnes & Noble to promote her self-published fantasy novel "Clara's Return."

FLORENCE — Suzanna Kinton held a book signing Saturday at Barnes & Noble to promote her self-published fantasy novel "Clara's Return."

The fictional tale is the third novel that the Holly Hill native and Francis Marion University graduate has written and published in the past three years, and she is in the process of writing a fourth. "Clara's Return" is the sequel

to her first self-published novel, "Clara," which was released in May 2013.

The two books are part of

See **LINTON**, Page 3A

FDTC Educational Foundation joins global #GivingTuesday

From staff reports

FLORENCE — The Florence-Darlington Technical College Educational Foundation is joining #GivingTuesday, the annual day of the-art learning equipment.

FDTC's theme for the fundraising effort is "We Are Because You Give." The theme refers to students



Florence-Darlington Technical College human services students

—
Camlin Moore

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