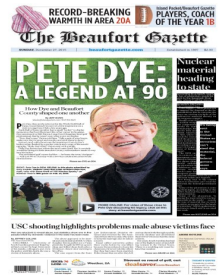


Title: **Nuclear material heading to state**  
 Author: By SAMMY FRETWELL The (Columbia) State  
 Size: 39.37 square inch  
 Beaufort, SC Circulation: 11269



# Nuclear material heading to state

According to a report, nearly a ton of plutonium would be sent to the Savannah River Site, where it will be stored.

By SAMMY FRETWELL

The (Columbia) State

COLUMBIA — More plutonium is targeted for disposal at the Savannah River Site as concerns rise about an existing stockpile of the radioactive material already on the weapons complex.

Nearly a ton of plutonium, a toxic nuclear weapons component, would be sent from Europe, the Pacific Rim and North America to SRS, where it would be stored until the government decides its final destination, according to a recent U.S. Department of Energy report.

The DOE environmental assessment, completed in Novem-

ber, shows ships would unload the plutonium in Charleston and secure trucks would carry the weapons-grade material 134 miles from the port to SRS near Aiken and Augusta.

It's being sent to the United States so terrorists can't steal the material, the federal government says.

Some of the plutonium is coming from Japan, according to the DOE's National Nuclear Security Administration.

Some of the plutonium "is among the most sensitive nuclear materials in the world — exactly the type of material that we need to ensure never gets into the hands of terrorists," NNSA spokeswoman Francie Israeli said in an email last week.

Please see NUCLEAR on 20A

**It's being sent to the United States so terrorists can't steal the material, the federal government says.**

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## NUCLEAR

**Continued from 1A**

Plans to send more plutonium to SRS are surfacing as state and federal officials struggle over what to do about existing plutonium on the 310-square mile site near Aiken.

During the past 15 years, the Energy Department has sent plutonium from nuclear sites across the country to SRS to eventually make mixed oxide fuel for atomic power plants. But construction of a factory to create the fuel is years behind schedule and billions of dollars over budget — and South Carolina leaders aren't happy about it. All told, SRS has at least 12 metric tons of plutonium stored there.

Gov. Nikki Haley said last week she wants the govern-

ment to process the plutonium already on SRS. If not, the government should remove the material, she said. She is considering a lawsuit against the federal government for its failure to process or get rid of the plutonium. Federal law also could result in fines next year of \$1 million per day against the federal government for failure to process the material.

Haley spokeswoman Chaney Adams said this week the governor opposes permanent disposal of plutonium at SRS.

"The governor has been clear about this critical quality of life issue since the beginning of the administration," Adams said in an email. "South Carolina will not be a dumping ground

for weapons-grade plutonium and nuclear waste."

Late Tuesday afternoon, The (Columbia) State newspaper learned the Energy Department is considering a plan to ship about six metric tons of plutonium now at SRS to an existing DOE disposal site in New Mexico. Details were not available, but a notice outlining the plan was expected in the federal register as soon as Christmas Eve, records show.

Such a plan could ease concerns in South Carolina, but it would not resolve all of the issues or answer all of the questions about the plutonium buildup at SRS. It wasn't known if the overseas plutonium to be shipped to SRS would be included in any New Mexico disposal plan.

Title: **Official to seek aid for farmers**  
 Author: By CASSIE COPE The (Columbia) State  
 Size: 51.15 square inch  
 Beaufort, SC Circulation: 11269



## Many warm holiday returns

# Official to seek aid for farmers

By CASSIE COPE

The (Columbia) State

COLUMBIA — The S.C. House's chief budget writer plans to introduce a bill to aid S.C. farmers whose crops were washed away during October's historic flooding.

The amount of state money S.C. House Ways and Means chairman Brian White, R-Anderson, will propose to send to farmers is undecided. However, S.C. farmers lost more than \$375 million in damaged crops, according to the

state Department of Agriculture.

"Agriculture is our No. 1 industry, and our farmers are in desperate need," White said in a news release.

He added crop insurance is insufficient in a catastrophic disaster.

State Agriculture commissioner Hugh Weathers told a state Senate panel earlier this month that only

about a third of crop losses are expected to be covered by insurance. That leaves about \$250 million in losses insurance will not cover.

Farm groups have urged Gov. Nikki Haley to request assistance for farmers from the state's congressional delegation. But Haley's office has said that request is for direct cash payments to farmers who chose to be underinsured.

Federal aid for farmers

is a possibility, White said. Otherwise, he added, many farmers could lose their farms and livelihoods.

Haley has said she will request \$114 million from state lawmakers for flood costs.

She also is asking the federal government for \$140 million to repair flood-damaged housing.

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DELAYNA EARLEY • Staff photo

**Ray J. McGorry, center, of Wilmington, N.C., throws the bocce ball while playing the game with his father, Ray McGorry, of Hilton Head Island, and his nephew, Cristian Grimes, 9, of Falmouth, Maine, on Friday afternoon at Coligny Beach on Hilton Head Island. "I like having the warm weather on Christmas because it lets us all go outside and have fun as a family," Grimes said.**



Title: **Samaritan's Purse helps displaced families**  
 Author: From staff reports  
 Size: 22.32 square inch  
 Georgetown, SC Circulation: 8446

# Samaritan's Purse helps displaced families

*From staff reports*

Wayne Watford knows his stamina is on the downward slide. When he was in his mid-20s, he could put in a full day's work at his job, then stay up till midnight building his new home with some buddies. That was in 1977. Today is a different story.

In fact, Wayne almost hit his physical breaking point a few weeks ago. Parts of his home in Andrews were damaged by the epic floods in Octo-

ber, and he was working feverishly to get his adult daughter's bedroom repaired. Tina has Down syndrome and her room is her world, so Wayne and his wife, Debbie, wanted to get it done and move Tina back in.

"Now that I'm getting older, I realized I couldn't tear that floor out by myself like I could back when I built the home," Wayne said.

Samaritan's Purse volunteers not only assisted Wayne in completing Tina's bedroom, they helped him

tear out the tile from an adjacent bathroom and finish it as well.

The mission was accomplished, all in time for the holidays.

"As the mother of a special-needs child, I was so thankful how the Samaritan's Purse volunteers took to Tina and she took to them," said Debbie Watford.

"Moved back in," Tina said.

The Samaritan's Purse effort is in support of the Rapid Repair Program initiated by Gov. Nikki Haley.



**Wayne Watford, his daughter Tina Watford, and wife, Debbie Watford.**

PROVIDED

Title: **Overdue diplomas finally to be awarded**  
 Author: By Chris Sokoloski csokoloski@southstrandnews.com  
 Size: 28.67 square inch  
 Georgetown, SC Circulation: 8446



# Overdue diplomas finally to be awarded

By CHRIS SOKOLOSKI

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Nearly 100 Georgetown County natives will be receiving high school diplomas soon. Some have waited for years for a diploma that had once been denied to them.

For years, students who failed the state's high school exit exam were denied diplomas. They were given certificates of completion instead. Many students could not pursue a college education without a diploma.

Last April, Gov. Nikki Haley signed Act 155 into law, allowing residents who met all the requirements for graduation except the exit exam, to receive diplomas.

Former students, starting with the Class of 1990, had

to petition their local school districts by Dec. 31.

Ninety-four Georgetown County residents petitioned the district and were approved at the Jan. 5 school board meeting.

Testing was a major topic of conversation for the board at the Jan. 5 meeting.

Board Chairman Jim Dumm said teachers are always complaining about how much time students lose due to testing and other activities that take away from instructional time.

The district recently surveyed school personnel to see how much time students spent doing things other than classroom instruction.

Patti Hammel, the district's executive director for student performance and federal programs, believes the missed class time was a "bare minimum."

"There's a whole lot of things that go into educating (a) child," Hammel said.

School Superintendent Dr. Randy Dozier agreed.

"Education doesn't occur just in the classroom," Dozier said, adding that he couldn't imagine sitting in a classroom all day, every day.

He said Georgetown County has unique destinations for educational opportunities like Hobcaw Barony and Brookgreen Gardens that need to be taken advantage

of. Dumm said teachers are also upset that they're evaluated by the test scores but the kids aren't in the classroom all the time.

Hammel agreed that teachers feel the "accountability factor" now more than ever before.

Although the state still requires end of year tests, Hammel hopes they will be eventually replaced by ongoing assessment.

The next school board meeting is Jan. 19 at 5:30 p.m. at the J.B. Beck Administration and Education Center on Church Street in Georgetown.





Title: **Rising River**  
 Author: By Eileen Keithly ekeithly@southstrandnews.com  
 Size: 197.62 square inch  
 Georgetown, SC Circulation: 8446

# Rising River

## *Santee residents contend with 'man-made disaster'*

By EILEEN KEITHLY

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Residents in the Santee community of Georgetown County were sandbagging their homes Jan. 6 and Jan. 7, moving their families and belongings to higher ground as the Santee River continued to rise due to controlled releases from Santee Cooper's dam and dike systems upriver.

Santee Cooper, South Carolina's state-owned electric and water utility, issued a news release on Jan. 4 stating that the

company was increasing the rate of release on the Santee Dam spillway to 97,000 cubic feet per second, up from 75,000 cubic feet per second late last week. The company began letting out water Dec. 25 at a rate of 20,000 cubic feet per second, but it increased the rate of release because of recent rainfall.

Residents along Corner Loop Road in Georgetown County said their neighborhood began to flood on Jan. 1, and it wors-

ened with each passing day.

"We called the county and told them that if the water continued to rise, we were going to have a serious problem out here," Everett Carolina said, "and the situation is now critical."

Jimmy Small, who lives around the corner from Carolina, said he was already experiencing serious issues with the rising river waters. And he expected more to come.

"I've moved my vehicles and boats several times," he said. "The water just keeps rising and will probably be in my house tonight. It's already up to the bottom of my front door, and it doesn't look like it is going anywhere but up."

For now, Small said, all he can do is pray that Santee Cooper stops releasing water into the Santee River.

See SANTEE, Page 6A

## Santee residents face 'man-made disaster'

FROM PAGE 1A

Carolina said residents in the Santee community were outraged after reading excerpts from a press release by County Public Information Officer Jackie Broach that were published Jan. 6 in The Georgetown Times.

"The county public information officer had the audacity to say that if you came out here and talked to people, we are not very concerned," Carolina said. "That is not true. We are very concerned because the river continues to rise and has not even crested, and it's not expected to do so until sometime on Friday."

The county press release indicated the Santee River reached about 23 feet in the Crow Hill Road area, and that it was, indeed, expected to crest by Friday, Jan. 8.

Residents like Small and Carolina said the county has been too slow in responding to the needs of

residents.

On Jan. 6, Georgetown County Emergency Manager Sam Hodge told the Times that the county is monitoring the Santee area and working with the South Carolina Department of Transportation and Santee Cooper to ensure the community's safety.

"We are out there every day keeping an eye on the situation," Hodge said. "We have gone door to door asking residents if they would like to evacuate, and so far, none of the residents in that area have elected to evacuate at this time. We also have sandbags available for any resident that might need them."

Hodge said sandbags are available for pick-up at 8 Oaks Park from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., but residents need to call 843-545-3273 prior to arriving at the park.

Small said that he wasn't sure when he would be evacuating but believed that time would be coming

very soon.

"I don't want to leave, but the water is continuing to rise and I just don't want to take any chances," Small said. "When you live along the river, you know that from time to time, there might be a natural disaster, like the heavy rain that caused all the flooding this past October. But you don't expect to have to deal with man-made disasters like this."

"It just doesn't make any sense to me why they would release that much water, knowing that there are people, hundreds of people, that live along this river that are going to be put in harm's way."

In a Jan. 7 telephone interview with the Times, Santee Cooper Manager of Corporate Communications Mollie Gore said the company was aware of "some isolated flooding in the Crow Hill area of Georgetown County," but she said she wasn't aware of any plans the

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utility company had to assist the residents that are experiencing flooding due to the controlled spills at the company's upriver dam.

"No, I don't believe we will be offering any assistance," Gore said. "These residents knew they were purchasing property in a flood plain. They knew the risks, and they knew their homes would be prone to flooding."

Residents in the Santee community said they are surprised that they have not seen anyone from Santee Cooper surveying the flooding.

"This is not the first time our area has flooded as a result of a Santee Cooper controlled release," Robin Smith, a Belladonna Court resident, said. "It's just very suspicious to me that the lake would be that high that (Santee Cooper) would need to do so many controlled releases, so close together, and then never send anyone by to check on the flooding."

Some residents said they had no idea there was a controlled re-

leased planned, and they were not prepared for the flooding. Other residents said they received a call from either Santee Cooper or Georgetown County.

Small said he and his neighbors did not receive a call from anyone.

"I don't have any record on my phone where Santee Cooper tried to call and tell me that they were planning on releasing water," Small said. "It seems like there should be some kind of policy in place that they have to contact you at least a few days or so before they pull the plug and the water starts flowing."

Gore said Santee Cooper has a notification policy in place, but there is no time protocol attached to the procedure.

"We notify residents every time we begin a spill or change a spill," Gore said. "However, we do not have a minimum notification time period."

"It takes the water several days to flow through the spillway and actually reach property owners

in Georgetown County. So, no, we don't have a certain minimum numbers of days or hours that we notify residents prior to a spill."

Gore said that Santee Cooper does all it can do to minimize the impact in any spillage operation.

"We do empathize with the residents that are experiencing flooding due to the spillage," she said.

South Carolina Emergency Management Division's Public Information Officer Derrec Becker said that Gov. Nikki Haley is aware of the situation in the Santee community and is receiving updates from Georgetown County officials.

"We rely on our teams in the communities to keep us updated, and Sam Hodge is doing an excellent job of that for Georgetown County," Becker said. "The officials in Georgetown County know the area far better than we do, and we know they will keep us informed. So far, there has been no request for state assistance from the county."



**The entrance to Belleflower Plantation subdivision on Corner Loop Road was blocked by rising water Jan. 6.**



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PHOTOS BY EILEEN KEITHLY / SOUTH STRAND NEWS

**The water continues to rise at the Carolina's home on Corner Loop Road in the Santee community.**

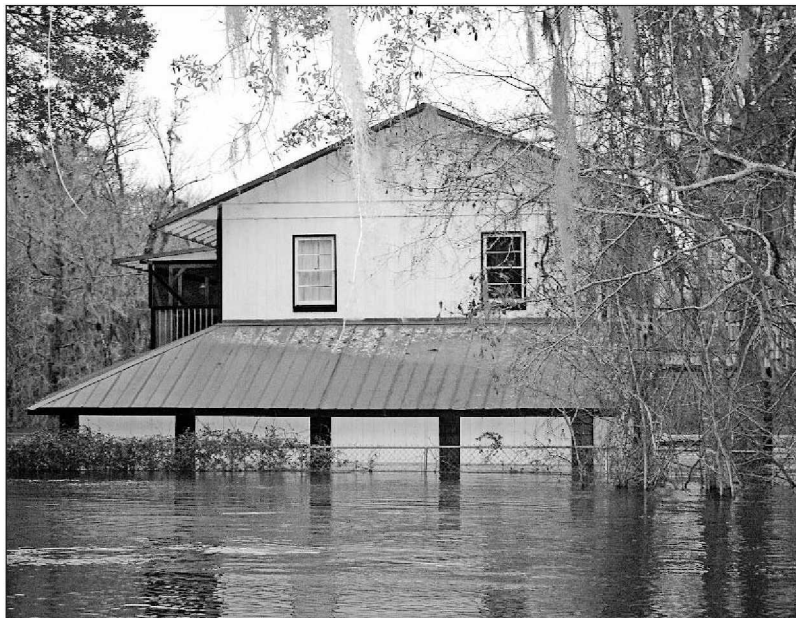


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**A home along the Santee River, next to Harris Landing is inundated with water Jan. 6.**



**The rising water from the Santee River flooded the entrance to the Small's home Jan. 6.**

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PHOTOS BY EILEEN KEITHLY / SOUTH STRAND NEWS

**A truck belonging to Jimmy Small sits in his yard next to his home.**