

Title: **Four in Senate fall in runoffs**
 Author: BY JAMIESELF jself@thestate.com
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ELECTIONS 2016

Four in Senate fall in runoffs

Conservative firebrand Lee Bright, R-Spartanburg, loses runoff

Longtime senators Larry Martin, R-Pickens, and Mike Fair, R-Greenville, also fall

BY JAMIE SELF
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S.C. voters pointed four state senators toward the exit Tuesday night – including two longtime lawmakers and state Sen. Lee Bright, R-Spartanburg, the Senate's most outspoken conservative firebrand.

In one of the night's closest runoffs, Moore attorney Scott Talley narrowly defeated Bright to

FROM PAGE 1A

SENATE

that some of his fellow Republicans have labeled outrageous.

After North Carolina passed a bill requiring transgender people to use the bathroom of their biological sex, Bright unsuccessfully took up the effort. He also pushed an unsuccessful proposal to allow the carrying of firearms without training or a permit, failed to get the state to study coining its own money and fil-

represent Spartanburg and eastern Greenville County.

"I feel for my supporters, but, quite frankly, being in the Senate hampers you on what you can do," said Bright, known for his filibusters and bucking his own party's leaders. The senator said he plans to get involved in grassroots efforts to ensure the state's next governor is someone voters can trust.

Gov. Nikki Haley endorsed Talley last

week, joining efforts by the the S.C. Chamber of Commerce and the Conservation Voters of South Carolina – two powerful lobbying groups – to prevent Bright from winning a third term. Talley's win means the Senate loses its fiercest advocate for right-wing policies

SEE SENATE, 7A

ibustered a landmark abortion ban that passed – despite opposing abortion himself – because it included exceptions for rape and incest.

Talley said he "knew it was going to be a hard-fought battle," having lost to Bright in 2008 by an even narrower margin. While Haley's candidate won in Spartanburg, the Republican governor also lost one contest Tuesday, with Rep. Stephen Gold-

finch, R-Georgetown, narrowly beating Reese Boyd for a state Senate seat. Haley endorsed Boyd, a Murrells Inlet attorney, for the Senate seat, which Republican Ray Cleary will vacate when he retires this year.

POWERFUL JUDICIARY CHAIRMAN OUSTED

A legislator for 37 years, state Sen. Larry Martin, R-Pickens, lost to Rex Rice, an Easley con-

struction professional and cattle farmer. "We had guidance from above. God helped us and led us, and that was important to our whole team," said Rice, a former state representative of 16 years. Rice ran unsuccessfully against Martin as a petition candidate in 2012. Rice faces no opposition in November.

Chairman of the powerful Senate Judiciary Committee, Martin's exit

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means that panel — second in its prestige and power only to the Senate Finance Committee — will have a new leader in January. Next in line for the chairmanship is Sen. Luke Rankin, R-Horry, who Haley unsuccessfully opposed in his GOP primary re-election bid.

A sometimes ally of Democrats and critic of Haley, Rankin's elevation would represent a significant shift in power. Martin has been a strong ally of Haley's.

GOP EDUCATION ADVOCATE LOSES IN LANDSLIDE

A legislator for more than three decades, Sen. Mike Fair, R-Greenville, lost in a landslide to challenger William Timmons, a former prosecutor from Greenville.

Timmons will face Constitution candidate Roy Magnuson in November. "It was a bad night for incumbents, but I don't know why," Fair said, before calling Timmons to congratulate him. "I got clobbered. It wasn't even close. ... With the margin of victory that big for Mr. Timmons, I think the constituency here has had enough of me."

Fair said he has no



Talley

regrets. He served on various committees dealing with public education and early childhood policy. "To have been a part of that success, it's been a blessing — just the whole notion that you maybe had made a difference."

IN OTHER SENATE RUNOFFS

- State Sen. Creighton Coleman, D-Fairfield, lost to Great Falls' Mike Fanning, executive director of the Olde English Consortium. An attorney, Coleman was elected to the S.C. House in 2000 and served four terms before being elected to the Senate in 2008. Fanning will face Republican Mark Palmer in November.

- A showdown between two Charleston attorneys ended with Sandy Senn beating Roy Maybank.

Sen. Paul Thurmond, son of former S.C. governor and U.S. Sen. Strom Thurmond, did not seek re-election. Senn faces no opposition in November, assuring the state Senate will include at least four women in January, up from two this year.

S.C. Senate primary runoffs

Results for Tuesday's state Senate primary runoffs:

REPUBLICAN

District 2

Rex Rice: 6,010

Larry Martin (i): 5,076

District 6

William Timmons: 6,244

Mike Fair (i): 3,318

District 12

Scott Talley: 4,861

Lee Bright (i): 4,562

District 34

Stephen Goldfinch: 2,798

Reese Boyd: 2,535

District 41

Sandy Senn: 2,524

Roy Maybank: 1,862

DEMOCRATIC

District 17

Mike Fanning: 4,674

Creighton Coleman (i): 3,635

SOURCE: Associated Press

Title: **Gov. Haley signs ethics reform bills in Easley**
 Author: RON BARNETT RBARNETT@GREENVILLENEWS.COM
 Size: 24.8 column inches
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Gov. Haley signs ethics reform bills in Easley

RON BARNETT
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Gov. Nikki Haley traveled to Easley last Thursday to sign two legislative ethics reform bills into law and to credit Sen. Larry Martin with getting the long-sidelined bills passed this year.

"The reason we are here, I have to say, is because of Larry Martin," she said.

Her visit came as Martin was facing a runoff in the Republican primary for the Senate District 2 seat against former House member Rex Rice.

She rebranded Martin, who has represented Pickens County in the Senate since 1992 and in the House before that, as a member of the "new guard," despite his long tenure in Columbia.

"We have a situation in Columbia right now where it's the old guard and the new guard," she said. "Senator Martin has

got with the new guard trying to get the old guard to change."

In response to a question during a brief press conference following the signing ceremony, Haley said she has "no negative things" to say about Rice, with whom she worked as a member of the House.

"But if we're going to talk policy, there was never a tax he saw that he didn't like," she said. "And I don't need another tax-and-spend senator."

Rice, contacted by *The Greenville News* after the ceremony at the Easley Law Enforcement Center, said he voted for just one tax increase during his time in the House and for five tax cuts.

"She needs to do her homework," he said.

He also said the ethics reforms Haley signed Thursday — which will require lawmakers to report their sources of income and send ethics complaints to an indepen-

dent ethics commission for investigation — didn't go far enough.

"What they passed in the ethics reform is a good start. But why didn't they finish it?" he said.

Although a revamped State Ethics Commission will determine if there is probable cause to complaints, it would send the cases back to House and Senate ethics committees to determine guilt and any penalty.

"Basically what they did today, it's like telling a cop you've got a bunch of hoodlums riding through town and the cop can turn on the blue light and tell the hoodlums they need to give themselves a ticket and decide what kind of ticket they want to give," Rice said.

Haley said she plans to propose more reform measures next year. It took five years to get this much reform through the General Assembly, she said.

Title: **Fanning unseats Coleman in Senate 17 Democratic runoff**
 Author: BY JENNIFER BECKNELL jbecknell@heraldonline.com
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DECISION 2016

Fanning unseats Coleman in Senate 17 Democratic runoff

Winnsboro's Creighton Coleman loses re-election bid after 16 years in Legislature

Mike Fanning of Great Falls earned 56 percent of vote, unofficial results show

BY JENNIFER BECKNELL
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 YORK

Challenger Mike Fanning of Great Falls narrowly defeated incumbent state Sen. Creighton Coleman of Winnsboro in Tuesday's Democratic runoff for Senate District 17, according to unofficial results.

With all three counties in the district – York, Chester and Fairfield – reporting, Fanning collected 4,674 votes, or about

56 percent, compared to 3,635 votes, or 44 percent for Coleman, according to results posted on SCvotes.org.

The runoff winner will face Republican Mark Palmer of York in November. District 17 includes parts of Chester, Fairfield and York counties.

Fanning and Coleman could not be reached late Tuesday, after results were posted.

In the June 14 primary, neither candidate garnered enough votes to secure the Democratic nomination. Fanning finished ahead in York County precincts, including the city of York and Rock Hill's south side, but behind in Chester and Fairfield counties. Coleman was just shy of the 50 percent needed for the Democratic nomination.

Fanning, director of the Olde English Consortium, had said winning the runoff was about getting people out to vote. He said he was counting on his campaign's grass-roots efforts to carry him through the runoff.

Fanning has argued much of the Senate district has been "forgotten" compared with other parts

SEE RUNOFF, 6A

FROM PAGE 1A

RUNOFF

of the state around it that are growing.

"Somebody needs to be fighting for the southern side of Rock Hill and Chester, and the rest of the district that tends to be the forgotten part," he said.

Fanning says he talks about education, taxes, roads and reform with voters, but he said one thing voters are "hungry for" is a relationship with their lawmakers.

"That's what seems to be lacking in general," he said.

Coleman, an attorney
 County: York

who was first elected to the state Senate seat in 2008, touted his experience and his record serving in Columbia for the last eight years.

Coleman had argued that job creation and roads are key issues with District 17 voters.

Coleman said he supports raising the state's gas tax to pay for road repairs. He expressed satisfaction that the General Assembly passed a roads bill but noted "it's not what it should be."

"Senate District 17 is

very similar in a lot of ways," he said. "Fairfield is having a tough time, Chester has been having a tough time but is starting to scratch and claw. We've got a good bit of economic development going on in Chester. Rock Hill is doing well, the city of York is doing well but could be doing better."

MARTIN LOSES SENATE SEAT

South Carolina Republican Sen. Larry Martin has lost his re-election bid, ending a 38-year legisla-

tive career.

The chairman of the powerful Senate Judiciary Committee was defeated in Tuesday's primary runoff by former state Rep. Rex Rice.

Pickens County voters first elected Martin to the state House in 1978, then the Senate in 1992. He has led the Judiciary Committee since 2012.

Martin came in first in the four-way primary two weeks ago with 45 percent of the vote, and Gov. Nikki Haley endorsed him last week.

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Rice served three terms in the state House before his 2010 unsuccessful run for Congress. He got 33 percent in the voting two weeks ago.

Jennifer Becknell:
803-329-4077



Fanning



Coleman

Title: **Talley tops Bright with a little help from outside**
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Talley tops Bright with a little help from outside

DOLPH BELL, RON BARNETT
AND AMANDA COYNE

THE GREENVILLE NEWS

The Conservation Voters of South Carolina said it knocked on 21,100 doors, made 7,500 phone calls, dropped 120,000 pieces of mail and spent more than \$90,000 trying to unseat state Sen. Lee Bright, who scored the lowest of any senator on its legislative scorecard.

Bright was also subjected to a seemingly endless barrage of attack ads on Greenville's two conservative talk radio stations — courtesy of the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, whose objections to Bright included his votes against tort reform, road-funding plans and aid to flood-stricken farmers.

It all proved too much Tuesday for the two-term Republican senator, who lost his second primary runoff battle with Spartanburg attorney Scott Talley.

With all precincts in Tuesday night, Talley had captured 299 more votes than Bright to win with 51.5 percent, according to the State Election Commission.

The victory means Talley will almost certainly be District 12's next senator since no one else filed to run in November's general election.

Talley, a former member of the S.C. House, attributed his win to "a lot of hard work and I think just the desire amongst the people in Senate District 12 to give somebody else a chance and see if we can get a seat at the table in Columbia on issues that matter to the Upstate."

Bright said his opponents were "able to define me with enough money, and we did fight back, but it was just an onslaught we could never overcome."

He also said he thinks voters trust-

ed Gov. Nikki Haley more than him and that his campaign saw a shift in the polls after Haley endorsed Talley.

Bright said he doesn't plan to run for office again — at least not for many years.

"I feel like as a family we've sacrificed enough," he said, "and maybe it's somebody else's turn."

Greenville County voters accounted for 41 percent of Tuesday's vote, and 53 percent of them backed Talley.

Earlier this year, Bright created a firestorm by proposing that transgender people be required to use public bathrooms correlating to their genders at birth instead of the genders they currently identify with. His proposal came amid a national controversy.

See TALLEY, Page 4A

Talley

Continued from Page 1A

sy over the same issue in North Carolina.

Bright voted to keep the Confederate flag flying on the Statehouse grounds and was expected to draw strong support from voters who share his view on that issue.

He was one of four state senators that Haley campaigned against this election cycle.

Tuesday night, the Conservation Voters of South Carolina and the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce relished the victory in a news release.

"Voters came to the polls today and stood up for the air, land, and water they love,"

said Ann Timberlake, executive director of the conservation group.

Ted Pitts, president of the state Chamber, said, "The results are clear, the majority of the people two weeks ago and again tonight wanted new conservative leadership in Columbia. The business community looks forward to working with Senator Scott Talley."

In Pickens, former state Rep. Rex Rice defeated longtime incumbent state Sen. Larry Martin in the Republican primary runoff for the state Senate District 2 seat.

Rice claimed 54.2 percent of the vote, according to the Pickens County Board of Voters

Registration and Elections

Martin, who has held the Senate seat representing Pickens County since 1992, had 5,076 votes to Rice's 6,010.

Rice gave credit to his campaign team for working hard with him to get his message out.

"I think people were ready for a change," he told *The Greenville News*. "When I was knocking on doors, a lot of the people were saying they like Larry but they were ready for a change."

Martin congratulated his opponent.

"I hand it to Rex and his campaign and wish him the very best," Martin said. "The

people of the county have been very good to me for a number of years in their support of me and I hope they will be equally supportive of him."

Meanwhile, after coming within 50 votes in the June 14 Republican primary, William Timmons unseated 21-year incumbent Sen. Mike Fair in Senate District 6 by nearly a 2-to-1 margin.

Timmons earned 65.3 percent of the vote in the Greenville County district that includes Furman, Paris Mountain and parts of Taylors and Travelers Rest. Fair received 34.7 percent.

Fair said he did not know why Greenville County voters



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showed such strong opposition to incumbent candidates Tuesday, but he was thankful that his constituents had allowed him to serve for more than two decades.

“Having the opportunity to serve, to vote on public policy, has been a real blessing,” Fair said.

Timmons said he was excited to win and planned to work on building coalitions with other legislators and legislators-elect in the six months before he takes office.

“A lot of what I want to accomplish is what a lot of other people want to accomplish,” said Timmons, citing his choice issues of ethics reform, lower taxes and reduced regulations on small businesses.

Title: **South Carolina Legislative Update**
 Author: By S.C. Rep. Bill Taylor, R-District 86
 Size: 137.64 column inches
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South Carolina Legislative Update

By S.C. Rep. Bill Taylor,
 R-District 86

Dear Friends:

The final weeks of this legislative session were fast and furious. It is always "do or die" before sine die with legislators maneuvering to find success for their bills. Fortunately, there was success on a number of fronts. This column touches on several major issues; next month I will offer a more comprehensive overview.

We have a roads bill

The most anticipated bill we passed in the final week of the session sets the stage to begin funding the needed repairs to fix our dangerous roads and bridges. Passage was uncertain. With two days left in the regular session, House Speaker Jay Lucas took the floor to call out the Senate for their lack of action and the governor for her lack of leadership. Late that evening, the Senate passed a roads bill. The next day, my House colleagues and I took swift action to give final passage to the Senate modifications. After two years and hundreds of hours of debate, the bill was sent to the governor, who signed it.

Three key components of the road funding bill are:

- Significantly reformed the Department of Transportation. Before allocating any additional dollars to the broken agency, I joined my conservative colleagues in demanding these reforms.
- Allocated \$4 billion in state dollars which must be used to repair our dangerous roadways, including 399 dilapidated bridges.
- Does not raise taxes.

What gets done?

SCDOT Secretary Christy Hall says the

UPDATE

Continued from 16

created to assist flooded farmers.

- 3.25 percent state employee pay increase totaling \$54.3 million.
- \$26 million to cover increased costs of operating the state's health and dental insurance plans, with no increases in the premiums paid by employees and no reductions in

plan is to borrow \$2.2 billion using bonds, enabling the state to spend about \$2 billion on interstates, \$1.2 billion to \$1.4 billion on pavements and \$950 million on structurally deficient bridges. It would finish all three phases of widening and improving Interstate 385, Columbia's "Malfunction Junction," and eliminate every load-restricted bridge in the state within 10 years.

Locally, Aiken County would see an additional \$84 million in road resurfacing projects, including 5 miles of Interstate 20 from the Savannah River to Exit 5. The proposed bridge replacement program would target 22 structurally deficient bridges in Aiken County. All this is in addition to the routine fuel tax funding that is used to repave state roads and state funding of the Aiken County Transportation Committee.

The bill is only a partial solution. This roads funding legislation is a starting point that allows for an expanded road repair program to get underway sooner rather than later. However, we're far from finished. A serious effort must be made next session to find a long-term funding stream to fix our roads.

CWP reciprocity with Georgia

It took only one day for Gov. Nikki Haley to sign legislation allowing reciprocity for Concealed Weapons Permit (CWP) holders between South Carolina and Georgia. Georgia automatically recognizes CWP permit holders from states that recognize Georgia. The legislation was initiated by the Aiken legislative delegation. While the bill won easy passage in the House, Democrat senators nearly buried it with 80 amendments. Once those objections were withdrawn, the bill

won Senate approval.

State budget approved

The General Assembly approved a \$7.5 billion state general fund budget. Here is how your money is being spent:

- \$84 million in DMV fees and fines and \$131 million in motor vehicle sales tax revenue is transferred to the State Highway Fund for road improvements.
- \$50 million is distributed among the County Transportation Committees to use for resurfacing and repairing roads in each county.
- \$49 million is allocated to SCDOT to address road repair costs from the October 2015 flood damage.
- \$40 million for the S.C. Farm Aid Fund

Please see **UPDATE**, page 17

coverage.

- \$218 million to increase the base student cost by \$130 for K-12 public school students.
- 2 percent salary increase for public school teachers.
- \$23 million for new school buses.
- \$28 million in increases for the state's colleges and universities, a 5.5 percent increase

on average.

- \$23 million increase in the Local Government Fund.

Budget impact for Aiken County

- USC Aiken sees a \$400,000 increase in recurring dollars (an additional 5.5 percent).
- Aiken Technical College gets \$784,216 in

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training equipment.

- ATC also receives \$7 million for the Life Science Building.
- \$126,000 in additional parks and recreation funding.
- \$1.8 million in additional funds for road repaving.
- \$305,500 additional money from the non-recurring Local Government Fund.

Ethics reform finally passes

At the very last moment, the Senate finally joined the House and agreed to ethics reform that would stop what some say "is like having the fox guard the hen house."

The ethics reform would no longer allow legislators to investigate themselves; that would be done by professional investigators at the

Ethics Commission. Another ethics bill calls for all public officials in the state to reveal their sources of private income, allowing citizens to

better see potential conflicts of interest.

Both bills were sent to Gov. Haley just as the legislative session drew to a close.

In response, Gov. Haley said, "After four years of hard work, the people of South Carolina have a real reason to celebrate. Income disclosure and independent investigations will help restore the people's trust in state government by making it more accountable to those it serves."

Lynn Teague of the League of Women Voters reacted to the passage: "It is wonderful that we will now have independent law enforcement professionals investigating complaints against legislators. The reform will give the public more confidence in the objectivity of investigations."

The House led the fight for ethics reform over the past two years, whereas some viewed the Senate as far more reluctant. Shortly after taking office in 2014, House Speaker Jay Lucas formed a special House panel to examine

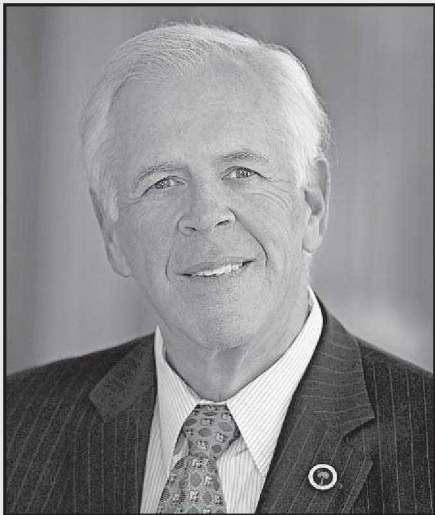
the state's ethics laws. I served on that panel. We developed a package of nearly 20 recommendations. While only two passed this session, they were the big ones!

Finished

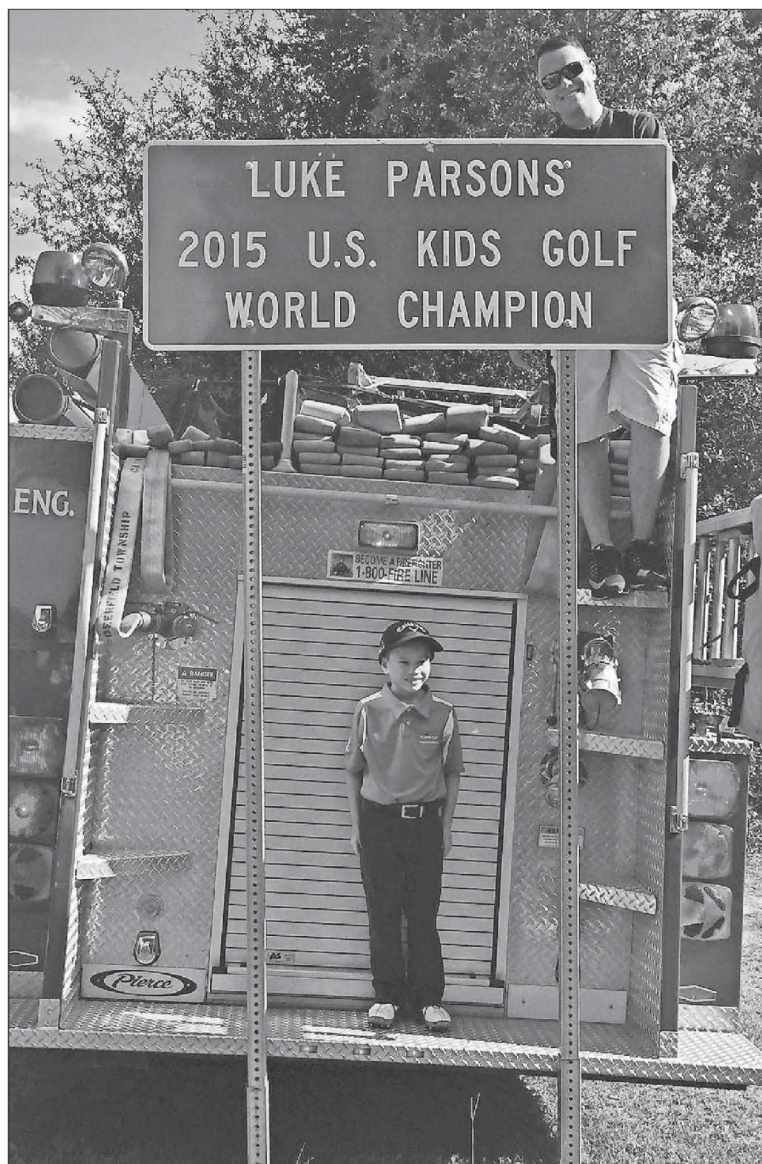
The 121st regular session of the legislature is finished. We could be called back in an emergency, but we'll definitely be back in business this December when the 122nd session convenes. Legislative work continues for me. Committees continue to meet regularly throughout the off-session.

I'm available and at your service

Thank you for allowing me to serve you at the State House. If you need assistance navigating state government, or have any thoughts or concerns about what we are doing, please do not hesitate to contact me. Contact information and much more is on my website: www.TaylorSCHouse.com.



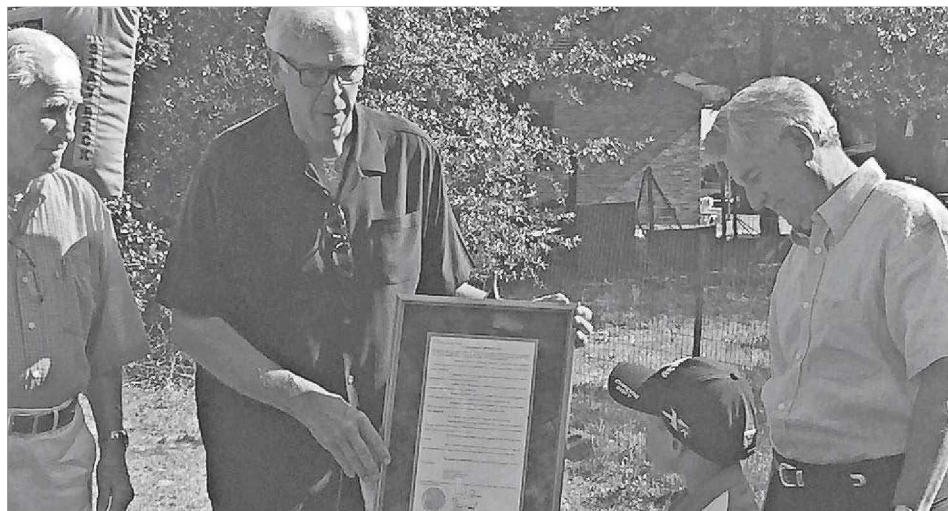
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PHOTOS COURTESY OF REP. BILL TAYLOR

Salley resident Luke Parsons, age 7, was recognized for his youthful golf achievements by Rep. Bill Taylor and Sen. Nikki Setzler when he was presented a Concurrent Resolution passed by the S.C. House and Senate. With the assistance of Salley volunteer fire-fighters, a SCDOT sign was unveiled along S.C. Highway 39 entering Salley. Luke was recognized for his excellence in youth golf and for winning first place at the 2015 U.S. Kids Golf World Championship in the boys age 6 and younger group. That championship tournament brought together young talent from 51 countries, spanning 10 different courses at historic Pinehurst, N.C.

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Rep. Bill Taylor and Sen. Nikki Setzler present the Concurrent Resolution to Luke Parsons of Salley. Looking on at left is Mayor Bob Salley.

Berkeley
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 Corner, SC
 Circ. 5906
 From Page:
 6
 6/22/2016
 64192



Chuck Burton/AP

People walk past photos of some of the victims of last year's shooting at Mother Emanuel AME Church before a memorial service honoring those killed in Charleston Friday.

Lowcountry remembers church shooting victims

BRUCE SMITH

Associated Press

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) — South Carolina's governor somberly held up programs from the funerals of the victims of the Charleston church shootings, saying Friday during a memorial service that the faith of those victims showed how to heal in the aftermath of still another mass shooting.

"As for me, I will forever know that there are angels on Earth," said Gov. Nikki Haley during a three-hour service that was alternately somber and then punctuated by joyous singing.

Friday was the anniversary of the shooting deaths of nine black parishioners during a Bible study at Emanuel AME Church. A white man, Dylann Roof, faces charges in both state and federal courts and prosecutors in each are seeking the death penalty.

Haley, who attended the funerals of all the victims, said she got to know the families of both those who were killed and the three survivors in the days and weeks following the shootings.

"There hasn't been a day since June 17, 2015 that I haven't thought about the 12," she said.

She recalled each victim,

sometimes with gentle humor, as she showed the funeral programs she says she keeps as reminders.

The Rev. DePayne Middleton-Doctor "had the voice of an angel," she said.

Haley recalled state Sen. Clementa Pinckney, the Emanuel pastor who was slain as "a gentle giant" and a man "who never talked about what he was against. He always spoke about what he was for."

Haley said that in the wake of the shootings — after which many family members of the victims said they forgave Roof, the suspect charged in the deaths — the people of South Carolina "didn't have protests, they had vigils. They didn't have riots, they had hugs."

The College of Charleston's TD Arena, where the service was held, sits about 5,000 people and was about half full. The stage was lined with the pictures of the nine people killed. Above each were the words "Still Speaking from Eternity."

It's the same venue where President Barack Obama gave a rousing eulogy during the funeral for Pinckney that included a rendition of the hymn "Amazing Grace" for the packed audience at the TD Arena. The

Obamas were accompanied by Vice President Joe Biden and his wife, Jill; nearly 6,000 people attended the funeral. Some 5,000 would-be mourners were turned away, apparently for lack of seating.

On Friday, a presidential aide read a message to the congregation from Obama and the first lady in which they said "as a nation we are deeply moved by your boundless love and your unshakeable resilience."

In the wake of the shootings, officials and businesses nationwide have taken steps to distance themselves from Confederate symbols and name. The suspect, Roof, had appeared in photos with the Confederate flag.

In Texas, the Austin school board voted to rename Robert E. Lee Elementary. The Houston school board voted to rename seven schools named for Confederate leaders. Ohio State Fair officials banned vendors from selling Confederate flag merchandise. In New Jersey, the nation's oldest and largest flag manufacturer decided a week after the shootings to stop making and selling the Confederate flag.

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From Page:
4
6/22/2016
64192



148 'Big impact' vote missed by many in June primary

BY LINDSAY STREET
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Of the 113,011 registered voters in Berkeley County, 5,836 cast ballots during the June 14 primary that chose at least two elected officials, which are uncontested in November. Turnout was at 5.16 percent.

In County Council District 3, incumbent Ken Gunn won by 285 votes. Among the 15 precincts in that district, there are 14,317 registered voters and 13,386 of those voters didn't cast a ballot.

In S.C. Senate District 37, incumbent Larry Grooms won by 643 votes. Among the 34 precincts, there are 47,424 registered voters and 44,334 of those voters didn't cast a ballot.

In precincts where there was a match other than the congressional race, turnout was slightly higher at or above 6.5 percent.

Berkeley County GOP Chair Tim Callanan chalked up the low turnout to two items: no gubernatorial race on the ballot and overall voter satisfaction with elected officials.

"Traditionally, this cycle of election there is low turnout," Callanan said. "My guess is – and certainly by the results (of incumbents winning) – when folks are generally satisfied with the way things are going they're not very energized to go to the polls. A lot of times, when you see big jumps at the polls, it's a reaction to something."

The low voter turnout is

nothing new for a non-gubernatorial party primary years. In 2012, the state saw 11.52 percent turnout and Berkeley County saw 4.39 percent turnout. In that same year, Dorchester County saw 12 percent turnout.

In the 2008 primary, the state saw a 20.33 percent turnout and Berkeley County saw a 15.81 percent turnout. In 2014, Gov. Nikki Haley did not have Republican opposition and turnout in the county was at 17.17 percent.

In South Carolina, races are typically settled in the primaries, according to College of Charleston Political Science professor Gibbs Knotts.

That means a Republican district will likely not turn blue in November, and a Democratic district will likely not turn red in November. So if there is a challenger or an open seat, it will be decided in June.

"If there is opposition in November, it's token opposition," Knotts said.

A majority of S.C. voters seem to either miss that point or are apathetic. This is evidenced by those same years (2008 and 2012) seeing a turnout in excess of 65 percent in the November election in Berkeley County.

"You can have much more of an impact on these local races," Knotts said. "(Local and state government) has a huge impact on your day to day life in ways the federal government doesn't."

How does state and local government affect constituents? For about every \$1 spent on federal taxes, the average Berkeley County household spends 36 cents on local and state government.

According to the U.S. Census, seven out of 10 Berkeley County residents own the home they live in. The median value of those homes is \$151,100. The average Berkeley County household makes \$51,844 per year.

Using those numbers and tax calculators, it appears that those households pay \$6,854.10 in federal income tax annually. But between the state income tax, property taxes, and county fees, that same household will pay \$2,472.87 in non-federal taxes. That figure doesn't include the 6 percent state sales tax, the county's penny transportation tax, and taxes on other property like vehicles and secondary homes.

Those taxes are decided by county council races and state elected offices – like the ones decided during the June 14 primary.

"It's so important (to vote in the primary). It has a big impact but it's something people don't prioritize like they should. Our system of government is this grand experiment that people thought, 'Hey we should get people to participate,'" Knotts said. "But it depends on people being active so it makes you worry when you have low single digit turnout numbers."



Berkeley
Independent
Moncks
Corner, SC
Circ. 5906
From Page:
b3
6/22/2016
64192



¹⁴⁸ Harmon receives Order of the Silver Crescent award

Goose Creek City Administrator Dennis Harmon has been awarded The Order of the Silver Crescent by South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley.

Harmon, who is retiring on Aug. 1 after 38 years as Goose Creek City Administrator, was presented the award by Rep. Joe Daning and Rep. Bill Crosby at the June 14 Goose Creek City Council meeting.

The Order of the Silver Crescent is the state's highest civilian award for significant contributions, leadership, volunteerism, and lifelong influence within a region or community.

Daning, who was recognized to speak by Goose Creek Mayor Michael Heitzler at the beginning of Tuesday's meeting, praised Harmon for his decades of strong leadership. Daning then read a letter from Gov. Haley.

Haley wrote that she was awarding the Order of the Silver Crescent to Dennis Harmon on behalf of the people of South Carolina.

"Your entire life has been marked by a level of achievement that brings enormous

credit to you and your community," Haley said. "Your leadership as the City Administrator for the City of Goose Creek for the past 37 years has resulted in tremendous growth and prosperity for your community.

"Through your guidance, integrity and dedication to civic involvement, you have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to the betterment of our state, and your many contributions will have a lasting impact for years to come.

"South Carolina is blessed by your tremendous work and community service, and I thank you for helping to make our state an even better place to live, work and learn."

The State of South Carolina describes The Order of the Silver Crescent as a once in a lifetime achievement.

Harmon received a standing ovation at Tuesday's meeting. His final City Council meeting as City Administrator will take place at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, July 12.

Source: City of Goose Creek



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Circ. 5906
From Page:
b3
6/22/2016
64192



Former Goose Creek City Councilmember and current S.C. Representative Joe Daning (left) reads Gov. Nikki Haley's letter at the June 14 City Council meeting as Rep. Bill Crosby (center) and Goose Creek City Administrator Dennis Harmon look on.



Herald
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C
Circ. 6289
From Page:
5
6/16/2016
63066



ECONOMIC AMBASSADOR - Bobby Brock, center, of Marlboro Water Company, was recently recognized as an Ambassador for Economic Development. Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt and Governor Nikki Haley presented Brock with medallion and plaque.

Dept. of Commerce honors Brock as Ambassador for Economic Development

COLUMBIA - As part of the 25th Annual Industry Appreciation Week, the South Carolina Department of Commerce recently announced the 2016 Ambassadors for Economic Development.

Recognized for their exceptional efforts to bolster community and economic development activities in South Carolina, the ambassadors were honored in a ceremony held at the Governor's Mansion Complex. This year, 46 individuals - one from each county - were selected.

Among those recognized was Bobby Brock, president of Marlboro Water Company.

"In South Carolina, growing our state's economy and creating jobs truly is a team effort, and the individuals recognized as ambassadors at last week's ceremony are proof of that. These local business leaders from all corners of our state are what really make South Carolina such a special place to live, work and play," said Gov. Nikki Haley.

Each year the Depart-

ment of Commerce joins local communities to thank businesses for their vital contributions to South Carolina's economy during the state's Industry Appreciation Week. As part of the celebration, the state recognizes individuals throughout South Carolina as Ambassadors for Economic Development. These individuals include local leaders from the private sector, representing a variety of businesses committed to advancing their communities.

"Businesses don't locate to a state or a region. They locate to a community. So, it's important to recognize the local leaders in communities all across this state that help move South Carolina and its communities forward," said Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt.

In addition to honoring the 2016 Ambassadors for Economic Development at last week's ceremony, the state also presented three businesses with the South Carolina Export Achievement Award and recognized five students as Young Entrepreneurs of the Year.



Herald
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C
Circ. 6289
From Page:
2
6/16/2016
63066



148 Gov. Haley signs tax cut for military retirees

COLUMBIA - South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley has signed a tax cut for military retirees into law.

Haley signed the bill Tuesday. The Legislature gave final approval to the compromise minutes before the session ended Thursday.

Supporters hope the tax deductions encourage working-age veterans to find a job in South Carolina after they retire.

The tax benefits for veterans who served 20 years in uniform will phase in over five years. By 2020, military retirees younger than 65 can deduct \$17,500 of their income earned in the state. Older retirees can exempt up to \$30,000. Once fully phased in, the cuts are expected to reduce state revenues by \$18 million.

The House's initial version allowed for bigger benefits sooner.

Sponsoring GOP Rep. Murrell Smith of Sumter says he'll try again next year.