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Governor Nikki Haley News:

Associated Press: Haley says goodbye, thanks residents for changing SC's image

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=faZZ3CE3

Seanna Adcox

Gov. Nikki Haley used her State of the State address Wednesday to say goodbye to South Carolinians and a job she calls "the greatest honor of my life." Haley thanked residents, who she called both the state's strength and hers, for changing the way the world perceives the state she loves. Her goal was always to better the state's image from being the punchline of late-night jokes, and the "people of South Carolina accomplished the highest aspiration I had for our state all on their own." They did it, she said, through their response to the 2015 "hate-filled atrocity" of nine people killed in a Charleston church, an unarmed motorist killed by a North Charleston officer, natural disasters and other crisis during her tenure.

The State: Haley says 'goodbye' to SC after 6 years as governor

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/article126029849.html>

Cassie Cope

Nikki Haley reviewed her six years as South Carolina's governor during her final State of the State address Wednesday, touting bringing jobs to the Palmetto State, rebranding the state's image and spending more on schools. "Ladies and gentlemen, the state of our state is blessed," Haley told lawmakers. Haley, the first woman and first minority elected to lead South Carolina, is poised to resign as governor to join the Trump Administration. A confirmation hearing on her nomination to be U.S. ambassador to the United Nations is set for next Wednesday. Haley directly addressed Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster, who will become governor. "Your love of South Carolina gives me great comfort, as I know you cherish our state and its people, and I know you'll take care of them."

Post and Courier: Gov. Nikki Haley delivers sentimental State of the State address

http://www.postandcourier.com/politics/gov-nikki-haley-delivers-sentimental-state-of-the-state-address/article_1422b218-d82a-11e6-8f9b-770f1d8c6d0c.html

Andrew Knittle and Maya T. Prabhu

In her final State of the State address, Gov. Nikki Haley struck a somewhat sentimental chord Wednesday night at the Capitol, calling her time in South Carolina's highest elected office "the greatest honor of my life." Wearing a royal blue dress and stopping to take selfies with lawmakers as she made her way to the podium, Haley delivered her farewell without any pause or sign that she might lose her composure. And while the short-term governor did address public education and took time to remind those in attendance of her work as a so-called jobs governor, she did not mention transportation and roads funding, or the ethics probe hanging over the Legislature, the state's ailing pension system and many of the issues lawmakers will undoubtedly grapple with in the next few months. "The state of our state is blessed," Haley said after spending several minutes thanking her family, friends, Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster and even the Clemson University football team, who won the national championship in stunning fashion Monday night.

Greenville News: Gov. Nikki Haley reflects on successes, tragedies

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/2017/01/11/governor-reflects-successes-tragedies-and->

[her-love-sc/96439338/](https://www.wistv.com/story/34241683/haley-praised-criticized-in-final-state-of-the-state-address)

Tim Smith

Gov. Nikki Haley bade farewell to South Carolina Wednesday night with a love letter speech to the state's citizens, pronouncing the state "blessed" and thanking South Carolinians for giving her a job that she said became "the greatest honor of my life." In her seventh and likely last State of the State speech to lawmakers because of her nomination as United Nations ambassador, Haley reflected on the state's successes and tragedies during her tenure and marveled at South Carolina's citizens, who she said turned around the state's image and made her proud to be governor. "They did it by showing the entire world what love and acceptance looks like," she said. "They did it by displaying for all to see the power of faith, of kindness, and of forgiveness. They did it by stepping up to every challenge, through every tragedy, every time." And in so doing, the people of South Carolina changed our image in a way no piece of legislation or shift in policy or job announcement could have ever accomplished. What a blessing to serve such people. What a profound blessing. Thank you for giving our family this opportunity. Because of you, South Carolina will always be our home."

WIS: Haley praised, criticized in final State of the State address

<http://www.wistv.com/story/34241683/haley-praised-criticized-in-final-state-of-the-state-address>

Mike DeSumma

Gov. Nikki Haley's State of the State address was filled with moments of reflection. The retrospect on her six years leading the state came Wednesday night as she looked back at the moments of triumph and tragedy before she moves on to a new role in the weeks ahead. "The people of South Carolina changed our image in a way no piece of legislation or shift in policy or job announcement could have ever accomplished," Gov. Haley said. Some lawmakers who were in the House chamber were pleased with her speech. "I think it clearly was a favorable address and we look forward to seeing her in her new role in New York as being the U.N. Ambassador for the United States of America," said Rep. Todd Rutherford. "We're proud to send her up there." Others believe the speech left more to be desired. "I wish her well," said Rep. Wendell Gilliard. "The fact is she left a lot of serious issues out of her State of the State."

WIS: Her last State of the State brings time of reflection for Gov. Nikki Haley

<http://www.wistv.com/story/34237904/her-last-state-of-the-state-brings-time-of-reflection-for-gov-nikki-haley>

Dawndy Mercer Plank

Gov. Nikki Haley will address South Carolinians in her seventh annual and final State of the State address. Next week, Haley will go before the U.S. Senate in a confirmation hearing to approve her as the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. I sat down for a one-on-one interview with the governor as she looks back at her six years in office and ahead to the new position on the world stage. "Coming in six years ago, I wanted to make everyone proud," Haley said. "I knew and I said in the interviews when I walk out that door, I want everyone to feel like I did a good job and I want to make them proud." Pending U.S. Senate approval, Haley will leave the office she called home the past six years, she says, as a different person. "Looking at what has happened through the last six years, I am changed because I have so much more faith in people, if it was even possible, than I did when I began," Haley said. "You look at two winter storms, you look at a school shooting, you look at a hurricane, a thousand-year flood, a tragic church shooting, a man who was shot down by a police officer. I mean, the list goes on and on. And through every single situation, the people of South Carolina lifted me up and strengthened me in a way I didn't know I could get through."

WACH: Gov. Haley says goodbye to SC in State of the State <http://wach.com/news/local/transcript-gov-haley-says-goodbye-to-sc-in-state-of-the-state>

Matthew Stevens

In what was likely her final State of the State address, Governor Nikki Haley remembered her time as governor of South Carolina.

The governor noted that she is ready to take on the roll of UN Ambassador. "It is a bittersweet thing,

taking on this new challenge, moving on from this state that I so love, called to serve this nation I hold so dear."Haley started her speech by thanking her family, staff and governor in waiting, Henry McMaster. "I know you cherish our state and its people, and I know you'll take care of them," she said.From there, Haley recalled when she was first elected and talked about the success her reign had in improving the state's economy and progress made in the state' education system.Haley then recapped the events that took place during her tenure, including the Georgetown fire, the Walter Scott shooting, the Mother Emanuel shooting, the removal of the Confederate flag and the 1,000 year flood.

WLTX: Lawmakers React to Haley's Farewell Speech

<http://www.wltx.com/news/lawmakers-react-to-haleys-farewell-speech/385392997>

Joyce Koh

In a reflective, grateful goodbye, Gov. Nikki Haley gave her final address, highlighting the changes South Carolina has made under her leadership. "I spoke earlier of my dear desire to see the image of South Carolina changed for the better," Haley said. "Standing here tonight, I can say with every confidence that it has happened, that that desire has been fulfilled."Haley touched on job creation and the steep drop in the unemployment rate since the start of her governorship. "If she's going to be remembered for anything its got to be job," Senate Majority Leader Shane Massey said. "She's done a tremendous job in brining jobs for the state."With her successor sitting right next to her, Haley said the two things she and Henry McMaster have in common are a love for the state and a love for music.

WLTX: Gov. Haley Says 'This is Goodbye for Now'

<http://www.wltx.com/news/politics/governor-nikki-haley-final-state-of-the-state-speech/385346894>

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley touted her record of job growth and education reforms in her final State of the State address, her last major appearance as the leader of the state. Haley spoke to a joint session of the legislature Wednesday night. Her speech lasted around a half-hour, the shortest of her state of the state speeches during her time in office."This is goodbye for now," she said toward the close of the speech. Haley expressed gratitude to be able to represent the people of the state. "What a blessing to serve such people. What a profound blessing. Thank you for giving our family this opportunity. Because of you, South Carolina will always be our home."The governor is leaving office nearly two years early to join the Trump Administration as the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. While it's not official until she's confirmed by the U.S. Senate, she'd not expected to face any real opposition during those hearings, which are set to take place a week from now.

WSPA: Haley Looks Back in Final State of the State Address

<http://wspa.com/2017/01/12/haley-looks-back-in-final-state-of-the-state-address/>

Robert Kittle

In what's expected to be her final State of the State address, Gov. Nikki Haley looked back on her six years in office and thanked the people of South Carolina. "The state of our state is blessed," she told a joint assembly of the South Carolina House and Senate at the Statehouse Wednesday night.She's been nominated to be U.S. ambassador to the United Nations in the Trump administration. Her confirmation hearing will be in Washington on January 18th."What a road we have traveled together," she said. "There have been good days, and there have been trying ones. There have been wins and losses, progress and setbacks, joys and frustrations. There have been times of great celebration and those of deep, devastating mourning. As I have thought back on it all, one thing has become so clear to me: serving as governor of the State of South Carolina is the greatest honor of my life."She talked about the tragedies and disasters the state has gone through, from two winter storms, a hurricane and a thousand-year flood, to a 6-year-old boy being shot and killed at school in Townville, to Walter Scott being shot by a police officer, and nine members of Emanuel AME Church in Charleston being shot by Dylann Roof after a Bible study.

WCIV: Gov. Haley says goodbye to work serving 'Beast of the Southeast'

<http://abcnews4.com/news/lowcountry-and-state-politics/gov-haley-says-goodbye-to-work-serving-beast-of-the-southeast>

Carolina Balchunas

Faith, kindness, and forgiveness, those are the words Governor Nikki Haley used to describe South Carolinians through all the good times and bad. She gave her last state of the state address Wednesday night. "Ladies and Gentleman, the State of our State is blessed," she said. "Serving as Governor of South Carolina is the greatest honor of my life." A lot has happened since she assumed office six years ago. She came in at a time when the economy was at its worst, when the state unemployment rate was hovering just above 11%. "We have announced 85,613 jobs. We have celebrated 672 projects, more than half of which were expansions," she said. "We've seen over \$21.5 billion dollars in capital investment in the state. Our unemployment rate is now 4.4%." The growth, she said, has earned the Palmetto State another nickname. "It's no wonder why they now call us, which I love, the Beast of the Southeast," she said.

The State: Democrat: Set aside partisan politics, fix long-standing problems

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/article126027929.html>

Avery G. Wilks

Democratic state Sen. Thomas McElveen followed GOP Gov. Nikki Haley's State of the State address Wednesday by asking his legislative colleagues to set aside partisan politics to solve the state's long-standing problems. "The people that I talk to – everyday people of different backgrounds and different stations in life – are tired of watching the same old cans being kicked down the road due to partisan bickering and political grandstanding," the Sumter attorney said in the Democratic response to Haley's address. "People become frustrated and lose faith in government when their priorities are ignored by those who control government." McElveen urged lawmakers and soon-to-be Gov. Henry McMaster to find money to repair the state's crumbling roads. He also called for better educational opportunities for students in poor schools, expanded access to health care in rural areas and a fix to the state's unfunded pension debt.

Nikki Haley: UN Ambassador News:

The State: Date set for hearing on Haley's UN nomination

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/article125911714.html>

Bristow Marchant

A date has been set for S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley to appear for a confirmation hearing on Capitol Hill. Haley will be in Washington on Jan. 18 for a hearing in front of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which is considering her nomination to be ambassador to the United Nations. The date of the hearing was posted online on the committee's Senate webpage. The hearing is scheduled for 10 a.m. It comes one week after Haley delivers what is expected to be her final State of the State address at the S.C. State House.

General Assembly News:

Associated Press: State Supreme Court to resolve lieutenant governor questions

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=Cy2V0FwL

Seanna Adcox

The South Carolina Supreme Court agreed Wednesday to resolve questions over how the lieutenant governor's office will be filled if Gov. Nikki Haley becomes ambassador to the United Nations. The state's high court accepted Sen. Tom Davis' request to take the case directly. Justices will hear arguments next Wednesday afternoon. That's the same day Haley's confirmation process as President-elect Donald Trump's pick for ambassador begins in the U.S. Senate and two days before Trump's inauguration. "What's clear to me is they want this matter resolved before the inauguration, when the dominoes could start to fall in South Carolina," said Davis, R-Beaufort. Justices are "determined not to leave us without a road map when the vacancy occurs."

The State: Supreme Court to decide lieutenant governor issue

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/article125929584.html>

Cassie Cope

The S.C. Supreme Court could decide soon who will choose the state's next lieutenant governor. The court will hear arguments in that dispute Jan. 18 at 2:30 p.m., state Sen. Tom Davis, R-Beaufort, said Wednesday. Davis had asked the court to rule that the governor cannot appoint the lieutenant governor until after the 2018 general election. In 2014, voters approved a constitutional amendment allowing the governor and lieutenant governor — now elected separately — to be elected on the same ticket starting in 2018, as the president and vice president are. However, ratification language for the amendment omitted a 2018 starting date for the governor to gain the ability to appoint a new lieutenant governor if that post becomes vacant, Davis says.

The State: Today at the State House: Keeping drones out of prison

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/article126061864.html>

Bristow Marchant

This morning at the S.C. State House, senators will be discussing the dangers posed by drones to the state's jails and prisons. S.176, a bill introduced by Sen. Vincent Sheheen, D-Kershaw, would make it a crime to fly an unmanned aircraft within a certain distance of a facility operated by the S.C. Department of Corrections. It will be taken up by the Senate's corrections and penology subcommittee. Officials have worried about drones as a possible way to smuggle contraband over the prison walls, although drone operators say drone flights are already regulated by federal law. Elsewhere, a joint study committee will consider several changes to the state's laws on the humane treatment of animals.

Associated Press: Lawmakers hope to keep South Carolina Conservation Bank

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=jA1PCe3b

SC State Wire

Some state lawmakers are working to make sure the South Carolina Conservation Bank continues to operate. The Post and Courier of Charleston reported (<http://bit.ly/2il2nWn>) that a coalition of environmental groups hopes to convince lawmakers to authorize the bank for another five years. Funding provided by the conservation bank has helped Morris Island and the Angel Oak in the Charleston area. The Palmetto Land and Water Legacy Alliance announced its formation Wednesday. More than two dozen environmental and business groups will push to save the bank, which could be curtailed next year. The bank is a public-private funding effort to conserve land. It has protected more than 300,000 acres since its start in 2004. Some lawmakers don't like the bank because it pays to conserve privately-owned land.

The State: Land protection bank must be saved, lawmakers say

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article125914364.html>

Sammy Fretwell

Two state lawmakers and a recently formed conservation group launched efforts Wednesday to save a government agency that protects open land. Sens. Chip Campsen, R-Charleston, and Rep. Bruce Bannister, R-Greenville, said they are introducing legislation to keep the S.C. Conservation Bank from closing in 2018. The bank is set to shut down that year unless lawmakers extend it. The bank's life would be extended 10 years if Campsen and Bannister are successful with their legislation. Bank supporters, including the Palmetto Land and Water Legacy Alliance, announced the campaign during a news conference Wednesday at the Statehouse. Since the bank's inception in 2002, critics have continued to question the need for a government sponsored land protection program. But boosters say the bank helps keep important natural areas from being developed. Funding for the bank comes from a portion of state fees collected when real estate is sold.

Post and Courier: Conservationists pitch all out, last ditch effort to save state Conservation Bank

http://www.postandcourier.com/news/conservationists-pitch-all-out-last-ditch-effort-to-save-state/article_ad1a2138-d747-11e6-9074-f78dcfb94cfa.html

Bo Petersen

The South Carolina Conservation Bank, the model state effort that paid to save Morris Island and Angel Oak, among other landmarks, is at the end of its funding rope. The bank's supporters have joined forces to try to save it. The Palmetto Land and Water Legacy Alliance announced its formation Wednesday, a coalition of more than two dozen environmental and business groups that will push to save the jeopardized bank, which could be curtailed in 2018. The bank, the state's groundbreaking public-private funding effort to conserve land, has protected more than 300,000 acres since its start in 2004, including landmark sites such as the historic island at the edge of Charleston Harbor and the iconic huge oak on Johns Island. The bank has been opposed by some legislators because it pays to conserve privately owned properties, and opposed by real estate interests because a state fee on property transfers funds it. State Legislature moves have slashed its annual funding almost in half, from \$22 million to \$13 million.

Post and Courier: MUSC Board of Trustees cuts back spending, receipts show

http://www.postandcourier.com/news/musc-board-of-trustees-cuts-back-spending-receipts-show/article_6cfebe80-d740-11e6-80c0-7341b4f988bb.html

Lauren Sausser

Members of the governing board of the Medical University of South Carolina have curbed their expenses after The Post and Courier reported that they routinely racked up expensive hotel and restaurant bills when they traveled to Charleston for meetings. In their first meeting after the newspaper's investigation was published in August, receipts from October show that board members continued to patronize some of the city's best establishments, but fewer of them filed for meal reimbursement and they spent thousands less on lodging compared with past meetings. In one case, a board member scratched off a \$65 bottle of pinot noir from her receipt instead of charging MUSC's doctors' group for it. MUSC spokeswoman Sheila Champlin said three board members who live outside the Charleston area had excused absences and did not attend the October meetings. She said the policies that govern board expenses remain unchanged.

SC Agency News:

Greenville News: Haley: DDSN needs to be in governor's cabinet

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/2017/01/11/haley-ddsn-needs-governors-cabinet/96363870/>

Tim Smith

Gov. Nikki Haley says it is time for the state's disabilities agency to come under the control of the governor, arguing that is the only way to get at the heart of problems with overseeing the state's vulnerable adults. The governor, who has been nominated as President-elect Donald Trump's United Nations ambassador, said in an interview that the state "absolutely" has a responsibility to protect vulnerable adults just as much as it does to protect children. "So many people look at vulnerable children but they don't realize we have the exact same problem with vulnerable adults and we have to consciously keep our eye on their caretakers, their health situation, where they are, who they are with and what's happening and that's a hard thing to do." Haley's staff for months has said more accountability is needed for the state Department of Disabilities and Special Needs. But this week the governor went further.

The State: A year after riot, Juvenile Justice says it does not need any more money

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/article125910099.html>

Cassie Cope

The head of the S.C. Department of Juvenile Justice told lawmakers Wednesday that her agency is not asking for any added taxpayer money. Lawmakers scrutinized the agency last year after riots broke out at a Columbia facility. Officials later blamed that riot, in part, on under-staffing. However, the

agency still has about \$8 million left over in its accounts that it can spend, director Sylvia Murray told legislators Wednesday. The agency's budget is about \$107 million a year, Murray said. After last year's riot, Juvenile Justice officials told legislators that low pay made it difficult for the agency to recruit and retain staff. In response, legislators approved an added \$1 million for \$1,500-a-year pay raises for Juvenile Justice officers.

Independent Mail: DOT studies Anderson County segment of I-85

<http://www.independentmail.com/story/news/local/2017/01/12/dot-studies-anderson-county-segment--85/96420106/>

Sharon Sellman of Powdersville, who spends part of each day on Interstate 85 in northern Anderson County, was among the curious residents who attended Tuesday's public information meeting hosted by the South Carolina Department of Transportation. She came with mild concerns over the traffic on that road now, and even more concern about traffic jams in the future. "I'm here to see that they don't do what they did in Atlanta," said Sellman, a legal nurse consultant and former Atlanta area resident. "They planned for the traffic at the time, but they needed to build for the future. So they've been working on the roads there for years, trying to keep up with the traffic. They never have." About a dozen DOT officials, armed with large detailed maps of Anderson County's northernmost 6 miles of I-85 and computer models showing predicted traffic flow in 2040, met the public Tuesday primarily to discuss future traffic problems. The group, led by DOT Program Manager Kevin Sheppard, kicked off what is expected to be a year-long study on the subject by seeking suggestions for local residents.

SC Delegation News:

McClatchy DC: SC's Wilson picked to head House subcommittee on military readiness

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/politics-government/national-politics/article125968169.html>

Matthew Schofield

Congressional Republicans are making rebuilding the U.S. military a focal point of the coming session, and South Carolina's Rep. Joe Wilson on Wednesday was put into the heart of that effort. Wilson, a member of the House of Representatives armed services committee since he arrived in Congress in 2002, was named the chairman of the subcommittee on military readiness. Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, and the chairman of the armed services committee, in an interview Wednesday said he made the appointment because American forces are facing "a deepening readiness problem" and Wilson understands what's needed. "We have weapons and equipment that doesn't work," Thornberry said. "We have personnel who can't get the training they need. Increasingly, we have personnel who are less trained than their counterparts in other nations."

The State: SC congressman wants to protect hearing – with firearm silencers

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/article125839609.html>

Bristow Marchant

A South Carolina congressman is hoping the new Congress can make it easier for gun owners to buy silencers for their firearms – in the name of public health. U.S. Rep. Jeff Duncan, R-Laurens, is a co-sponsor of the Hearing Protection Act. The bill would remove silencers from the National Firearms Act – the same category as machine guns and grenades. The change would eliminate a \$200 tax and a nine-month approval process. "I've been shooting since I was a young child – beginning with plinking with a .22 rifle and dove hunting with my dad," Duncan said in announcing the bill this week. "My hearing has been damaged because of gun noise. Had I had access to a suppressor, it may have protected me, as well as millions of other Americans, from this sort of hearing loss."

Independent Mail: U.S. Rep. Duncan seeks to ease federal restrictions on gun silencers

<http://www.independentmail.com/story/news/local/2017/01/11/us-rep-duncan-seeks-ease-federal-restrictions-gun-silencers/96404574/>

Kirk Brown

U.S. Rep. Jeff Duncan and a Texas congressman introduced legislation this week that would ease

federal restrictions on obtaining firearm suppressors. Duncan and U.S. Rep. John Carter, a Texas Republican, say their measure is aimed at protecting hunters and other gun owners from hearing loss. Duncan is a Republican from Laurens whose district includes Anderson, Oconee and Pickens counties, as well as part of Greenville County. "I've been shooting since I was a young child — beginning with plinking with a .22 rifle and dove hunting with my dad," Duncan said in a statement issued by his office. "My hearing has been damaged because of gun noise. Had I had access to a suppressor, it may have protected me, as well as millions of other Americans, from this sort of hearing loss."

Aiken Standard: Wilson introduces new legislation to block DOE from constructing new facilities until Yucca Mountain decision

http://www.aikenstandard.com/news/wilson-introduces-new-legislation-to-block-doe-from-constructing-new/article_e973d736-d82e-11e6-9826-4bb84c758974.html

Thomas Gardiner

U.S. Rep. Joe Wilson, R-S.C., introduced new legislation Wednesday that intends to block any new defense nuclear waste disposal facilities while the fate of Yucca Mountain in Nevada remains uncertain, all while emphasizing the need for a pathway out of South Carolina for high-level nuclear waste. The legislation is called the Sensible Nuclear Waste Disposition Act. Yucca Mountain was approved as the U.S. site for high-level nuclear waste in 2002 and was under development until 2010. Funding was cut by an amendment to a Department of Defense appropriations bill, shuttering the project. The U.S. Department of Energy published in December 2016 a new plan to establish a new repository through a "consent-based" approach. That plan is forecast to take many years to designate a new site and requires the input and consent of communities near potential sites.

The State: Graham, Scott celebrate Clemson win on U.S. Senate floor

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/article125878564.html>

Bristow Marchant

Clemson's football team will receive another honor on Wednesday after their national championship win over Alabama. South Carolina's U.S. senators plan to recognize the Tigers on the floor of the U.S. Senate. Lindsey Graham and Tim Scott will both take to the floor to congratulate Clemson on the school's second national championship since 1981. The remarks can be watched live online around 4 p.m. on the Senate website. Graham and Scott aren't the first to honor the national champions. U.S. Rep. Joe Wilson, R-Springdale, also praised the Tigers on the floor of the House. Closer to home, the team was honored with at the S.C. State House the day after their victory when Gov. Nikki Haley, a proud Clemson grad, ordered an orange Clemson flag raised over the State House dome. Similar flags were raised to honor other championship schools in the state, despite concerns the practice could violate the state's Heritage Act.

Post and Courier: Sens. Lindsey Graham and Tim Scott to give Clemson shout-out in Senate today

http://www.postandcourier.com/news/sens-lindsey-graham-and-tim-scott-to-give-clemson-shout/article_701d1864-d82b-11e6-8e14-5396e432ba74.html

Schuyler Kropf

U.S. Sens. Tim Scott and Lindsey Graham will go to the Senate floor today to congratulate the Clemson University football team on their win over the University of Alabama in the 2017 College Football Playoff National Championship. Clemson defeated the Crimson Tide 35-31 Monday night in Tampa, Fla. The joint floor speech by the two South Carolina Republicans is scheduled to begin at approximately 4 p.m.

Post and Courier: Someone called Sen. Tim Scott the N-word on Twitter. The South Carolina senator shut it down with one word.

http://www.postandcourier.com/news/someone-called-sen-tim-scott-the-n-word-on-twitter/article_85396102-d859-11e6-b713-0bb3f89d8cae.html

Caitlin Byrd

U.S. Sen. Tim Scott, the only black Republican senator, shut down a racist tweet Wednesday with a pithy one-word response. The tweet, which has since been deleted from a Twitter account that has also disappeared from the Internet, called Scott a “house n----a.” “Senate,” Scott, the Republican senator from South Carolina, tweeted back. The tweet took aim at Scott and former Jeff Sessions aide William Smith — two black men who support Jeff Sessions for attorney general. The tweet was deleted shortly after Scott’s response. This isn’t the first bigoted comment Scott has had to field, according to his communication director Sean Smith.

SC Political News:

McClatchy DC: Trump says no one cares about his tax returns anymore. This SC GOP congressman does.

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/national/article125937579.html>

Vera Bergengruen

President-elect Donald Trump shrugged off questions about his unreleased tax returns on Wednesday, arguing that Americans aren’t concerned about the issue. “I won. And became president,” he said at a press conference, the first one in nearly six months. “You know the only ones who care about my tax returns are reporters.” Rep. Mark Sanford says he cares, too. “I think it’s a grave mistake for President-elect Trump to assume that no one - except reporters - cares about whether or not he releases his tax returns,” the South Carolina Republican said in a statement on Wednesday. “I care... If President-elect Trump wants us to take him at his word, then certainly he should hold true to his former promises to make his tax returns public.” During his campaign, Trump insisted that he could not release his tax returns because they were under audit. The Internal Revenue Service told McClatchy last year that there is nothing preventing Trump from releasing his tax information, whether he is being audited or not.

SC Military News:

Associated Press: US Navy: New destroyer to be commissioned in South Carolina

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=eZyYpAi2

SC State Wire

One of the U.S. Navy’s newest warships is going to be commissioned in Charleston, South Carolina, home of its Marine Corps namesake and recipient of the Medal of Honor. The Navy announced Wednesday the ceremony for the USS Ralph Johnson will be in the hometown of Marine Pfc. Ralph H. Johnson. He posthumously received the U.S. military’s highest award for his actions during the Vietnam War. The 19-year-old used his body to shield two fellow Marines from a grenade, dying instantly in March 1968. No date has been set for the ceremony. The ship is the Navy’s 64th Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer and was launched in Pascagoula, Mississippi, on Dec. 12, 2015. The Navy says the ship has adopted the motto of Johnson’s Marine battalion, “Swift, Silent, Deadly.”

Dylann Roof Case:

Associated Press: The Latest: Judge formally sentences Dylann Roof to death

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=AsURS7Ti

SC State Wire

A judge has formally sentenced Dylann Roof to death for killing nine black worshippers in a racist massacre at a Charleston church. U.S. Judge Richard Gergel handed down the sentence Wednesday at a hearing to affirm the jury’s decision on the death penalty for the 22-year-old avowed white supremacist. Gergel couldn’t change the jury’s decision. Roof showed no reaction as he has through almost all of the federal hate crimes trial. He also did not choose to speak Wednesday and kept a blank face as Gergel sentenced him. More than 30 family members of the victims at Emanuel AME church spoke during the hearing. Some were angry, others forgiving. But they all said Roof failed at

his goal to further divide blacks and whites.

Associated Press: Church members join relatives in grief, anger at gunman

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=eXvZwS7I

Jeffrey Collins

Family members of the nine people Dylann Roof killed in a Charleston, South Carolina, church weren't the only ones who suffered. Their church family grieved, too. Along with the 32 family members of victims, three people connected to Emanuel AME Church spoke as Roof was formally sentenced to death Wednesday in federal court. "When you have attended nine wakes and nine funerals, it is heartbreaking," said Ruby Martin, the most senior member of the church who admitted it took her several weeks after the 2015 shootings before she could go back.

Associated Press: Relatives of slain churchgoers confront gunman for last time

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=fYyss5NZ

Jeffrey Collins

One by one, family members of nine slain black parishioners confronted Dylann Roof for the last time Wednesday, shouting at him, offering forgiveness and even offering to visit him in prison as he awaits execution for the slaughter. The 22-year-old avowed white supremacist refused to meet their gaze and simply stared ahead, his head tilted down slightly as it had been for much of his trial. "Dylann," Janet Scott said quietly as she started speaking. "Dylann! DYLANN!" she said, her voice rising. Toward the end of her remarks, she said, "I wish you would look at me, boy." Scott, an aunt of 26-year-old Tywanza Sanders, the youngest victim killed in the massacre, demanded that Roof look at her as she talked about her nephew's "great big heart," which could not be donated because of the police investigation.

The State: Anger, taunts, forgiveness fly at Roof before judge pronounces death penalty

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/crime/article126004049.html>

John Monk

In the four hours before a federal judge formally sentenced him to death on Wednesday, an unrepentant Dylann Roof sat in a federal courtroom as 35 people who loved his nine victims stared him down and bared their hearts. "You wanted people to kill each other. But instead you started a love war. ... And they removed the Confederate flag!" Melvin Graham, brother of the slain Cynthia Graham Hurd, told Roof, referring to how the slayings at Emanuel AME Church have led to increased racial understanding. "What I want to tell you is, your mission failed! Failed! Failed! Failed! Failed!" cried another relative. Roof, 22, a self-described white supremacist from Columbia, had gone to Charleston on June 17, 2015, in hopes of starting a race war that white people would win. For months before, Roof had scouted the church and decided that because of Mother Emanuel's significance in Charleston's history and its prominent members, it was the perfect place to kill a group of innocents who wouldn't fight back.

USA Today: 'Justice has been served,' families say to Dylann Roof

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2017/01/11/dylann-roof-sentencing/96460324/>

To the convicted murderer who sat just feet in front of them, a few family members demanded he look at them, calling out with a sharp, "Dylann Storm Roof!" in frustration that he would not meet their eyes. Others addressed the self-admitted white supremacist, one whose violence took the lives of nine African American parishioners at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church here, with a more familiar "Dylann," in what felt like a subtle commentary on how he had become intertwined in so many lives. Not once did the 22-year-old turn his head. He did not look to see who called him evil or wished God might grant mercy on his soul or who wanted to recount the profound loss of a loved one. On Wednesday, a day after a jury determined Roof should pay with his life for his June 17, 2015 attack, Judge Richard Gergel of U.S. District Court sentenced him following more than four hours of victim-impact statements from nearly three dozen people who in emotional statements spoke of grief, anger and love.

CNN: Victim's dad warns Dylann Roof: 'Your creator ... he's coming for you'

<http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/11/us/dylann-roof-sentencing/>

Those whom Dylann Roof hurt the most had the chance to address the convicted killer before his Wednesday sentencing, with one of the victims' sisters calling him "among the worst kind of evil." Roof on Wednesday was formally sentenced to death -- as recommended by the jury -- for killing nine people at a historically black church in Charleston, South Carolina, in 2015.

He is the first federal hate-crime defendant to be sentenced to death, a Justice Department spokesman said. He has 14 days to appeal his sentence. Roof had indicated he wanted to speak at the sentencing hearing, but he didn't. Instead he listened to a long line of people whose loved ones he stole. More than one family member took issue with the defendant failing to make eye contact with them. "Dylann ... Dylann! I know you can hear me," said Janet Scott, Tywanza Sanders' aunt. "Even as (Tywanza) knelt there and asked you why you were doing this, he was showing you love. He was showing you that one last chance, but you chose not to instead." The Rev. Dan Simmons' son, Dan Simmons Jr., opened his statement by telling Roof, "I understand why you don't want to look at us, so I will speak to the spirit that possesses you."

ABC News: Charleston Victim's Mother Tells Dylann Roof 'I Forgive You' as He's Sentenced to Death

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/charleston-victims-mother-tells-dylann-roof-forgive/story?id=44704096>

Felicia Sanders, the mother of one of the nine victims killed by Dylann Roof in a Charleston church, told Roof this morning at an emotional sentencing hearing, "I forgive you." "That's the easiest thing I had to do. But you don't want to help somebody who don't want to help themselves," she told her son's killer, according to ABC affiliate WCIV. "May God have mercy on your soul." Sanders survived Roof's shooting rampage on June 17, 2015, that killed nine black parishioners who had gathered at the Charleston, South Carolina, church for Bible study. She was there when her son, Tywanza Sanders, was shot to death. A jury on Tuesday afternoon sentenced Roof to death. His formal sentencing was held today, during which Felicia Sanders and other family and friends of the victims addressed Roof directly in court. Roof did not look at them as they spoke. After the statements from family and friends, Roof declined to speak. Roof was then formally sentenced to death.

Opinion/Editorial:

Post and Courier: Haley's fondest farewell

http://www.postandcourier.com/opinion/editorials/haley-s-fondest-farewell/article_b5736728-d85e-11e6-8e26-b3543df7bf8e.html

Editorial

During her seventh and final State of the State address Wednesday, S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley reflected on some of the most significant achievements made during her tenure — new jobs, new industry, fiscal caution, ethics reform and a heightened focus on public education. Certainly she deserves credit for those accomplishments and for dealing effectively with several crises that could have been much worse without her able leadership, including the shooting deaths at Emanuel AME Church, floods and winter storms, a hurricane and a state divided over the Confederate flag. And she did so with grace and strength. Gov. Haley, who is expected to become the U.S. ambassador to the U.N. as selected by President-elect Donald Trump, will step down should that happen and Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster will become governor. He will have a lot to do to continue her initiatives and fill in some gaps.

South Carolina News:

Post and Courier: New website compiles school closures and delays across South Carolina

http://www.postandcourier.com/news/new-website-compiles-school-closures-and-delays-across-south-carolina/article_8bc4e15e-d809-11e6-a54a-3f31884036bf.html

Paul Bowers

The next time South Carolina schools cancel class due to nasty weather, parents will have one more place to check for updates. The S.C. Department of Education has launched a School Closure Web Application at SCSchoolClosings.com that will display school closures and delays from every school district in the state. "With recent school closures due to natural disasters and with the winter weather season upon us, our goal is to streamline and give the public the most up-to-date information on the status of our public schools," said State Education Superintendent Molly Spearman. Local school districts usually make the call on canceling classes or opening on a delayed schedule when bad weather strikes. In rare cases like October's Hurricane Matthew evacuations, the governor can also announce closures in specific areas of the state.

Local News:

Associated Press: Union County man gets 42 years in stepmother's killing

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=VeFk4W3y

SC State Wire

A Union county man has been sentenced to 42 years in prison after pleading guilty in his stepmother's shooting death. Multiple media outlets report that 40-year-old Ashley Dean Tyler told the court Tuesday he killed his 61-year-old stepmother Rebecca Tyler in her home in November of 2015. Her body was found by a co-worker when she didn't come to work. Officials said she had suffered gunshot wounds to the head, heart and abdomen. Union County Sheriff David Taylor said Tyler told the court he was sorry for what he'd done. Tyler was also sentenced to 15 years for an escape from the Union County Jail last August after he took apart a chain link fence. He was caught in some woods by officials using bloodhounds.

Associated Press: Mother gets prison time for death of baby found in creek

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=mOrjt4CT

SC State Wire

A woman has been sentenced to 27 years in prison after pleading guilty in the drowning death of her infant daughter more than a year ago in a rain-swollen creek. Local news outlets report that 34-year-old Sarah Lane Toney pleaded guilty Wednesday to homicide by child abuse in 5-month-old Grace Carlson Santa Cruz's death. A forensic psychologist testified that Toney was under the influence of methamphetamine and opioids when she walked into the flooded creek near Socastee with her daughter in November 2015. The baby's body was recovered from the water days later. Toney told authorities she was carrying her daughter across the creek when the child was washed away.

Sun News: Woman sentenced to prison for drowning her baby while she was on meth, opioids

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/news/local/crime/article125954414.html>

Emily Weaver

A woman accused of drowning her 5-month-old daughter in a flooded Socastee creek in 2015 pleaded guilty Wednesday to homicide by child abuse after a forensic psychologist testified the woman was under the influence of methamphetamine and opioids at the time of the child's death. Judge Steven John sentenced 34-year-old Sarah Lane Toney to 27 years in prison with credit for time served. Toney gasped and cried as the sentence was handed down. "Oh God," she wailed, exiting the courtroom. On Nov. 3, 2015, Toney left her home on Simms Drive in Socastee. With her 5-month-old daughter, Grace Carlson Santa Cruz, in her arms, Toney went into a creek that borders the house. Toney was seen drenched and alone on the porch of a residence on Shem Creek Circle, saying she went into the creek with her baby, police said. Horry County police began searching for the missing baby at 10:30 a.m. after the resident of the Shem Creek Circle house called authorities.

The State: Richland Co. officials applaud closure of Backpage.com's adult services section

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/crime/article125947444.html>

Teddy Kulmala

Richland County officials lauded a decision by Backpage.com to shut down its adult services section,

which they say was a major avenue for human traffickers to conduct business. Backpage.com announced Monday it would shut down access to its adult services section in the United States. The decision came after the release of a Senate subcommittee report that accused the classifieds site of creating a marketplace that makes child sex trafficking easier. "This decision will have a huge impact on human trafficking and prostitution," said Sheriff Leon Lott, whose agency has worked nearly 2,000 cases through the National Human Trafficking Hotline. "I applaud that this action is finally being taken. Lives will be saved." It was unclear how many of those cases worked by the Sheriff's Department were connected to Backpage.

Associated Press: Horry County sets new rules for late-night bar operations

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=3nSd2Lhk

SC State Wire

Horry County Council has decided against requiring bars to close at 2 a.m. Local media outlets reported that the council decided Tuesday that county officials will more closely review requests by new bar owners to stay open between midnight and 6 a.m. Council Chairman Mark Lazarus says the more detailed reviews will improve safety in late-night businesses. Bar owners and people who go to bars late at night had complained about a proposal to shut them down by 2 a.m. to improve safety in the area. Many of those opposed to the idea work late-night shifts in the service industry and then want to go have a drink. Existing bars and new establishments must submit safety plans on how they will eliminate criminal activity and prevent service to underage patrons.

WACH: Software company creating 100 jobs in downtown Columbia

<http://wach.com/news/local/software-company-creating-100-jobs-in-downtown-columbia>

Matthew Stevens

A software services provider is investing seven figures to expand their operation in Richland County. TCube Solutions is investing \$1.7 million into a new facility and will be adding 100 jobs. The company, which started in 2007, will be moving to a 25,000 square-foot facility at Spirit Communications Park. "TCube's growth in Richland County, with its decision to invest an additional \$1.7 million, is another success story that shows that Team South Carolina has developed a business environment where companies of all kinds can thrive," said Gov. Nikki Haley.

Herald-Journal: Horses for 2018 World Equestrian Games could go through GSP

<http://www.goupstate.com/news/20170111/horses-for-2018-world-equestrian-games-could-go-through-gsp?rssfeed=true>

Bob Montgomery

Organizers of the upcoming 2018 World Equestrian Games in Tryon, N.C., say Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport will likely become the point of entry for hundreds of horses from around the world for the event. However, the federal agency in charge of oversight of horse transportation has not yet designated an airport for the games. "Clearly GSP is the closest airport to our facility," said Sharon Decker, chief operating officer of Tryon Equestrian Partners. "We have had conversations with (GSP) about planes flying there with horses. GSP has the runway length. It looks like the natural place to happen." GSP is about 28 miles from Tryon, while Charlotte Douglas International Airport is 84 miles away and Atlanta Hartsfield International Airport about 200 miles from Tryon. The Tryon International Equestrian Center was recently selected by the Federation Equestre Internationale — the worldwide governing body of equestrian sport — to host the two-week sporting event that will run Sept. 10-23, 2018.

The State: Columbia activist Sarah Crawford Fox dies at 75 <http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article125924664.html>

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article125924664.html>

Sarah Ellis

Sarah Crawford Fox loved animals, chamber music and Barack Obama. She kept company with famous authors and almost never wore makeup. She was fiercely true to her identity until her death a week ago. A Columbia activist, former book editor and advocate for liberal causes, Fox died Jan. 3

after a lengthy illness, according to her son, Colin Travis Fox. "She went her own way. She was a person who could really be herself, and I so much admire that," said Beth Crawford, a longtime friend of Fox's. Fox believed "you need to love (other people) for what they are and then try to be yourself and hope they'll love you back." Fox, born in 1941 and raised in New York City's Greenwich Village, would have celebrated her 76th birthday Thursday.

President-elect Trump News:

Associated Press: A farewell address, a news conference and White House change
<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/7f068c7ee18d4741b579a3ca9fb8b028/farewell-address-news-conference-and-white-house-change>

The outgoing president somberly ruminated about the fragility of democracy and earnestly implored Americans to reject corrosive political dialogue. Fourteen hours later, the incoming president staged a defiant and frenetic news conference at his gilded New York City tower, dismissing critics, insulting reporters and likening the country's intelligence officers to Nazis. President Barack Obama's farewell address in his hometown of Chicago on Tuesday night and President-elect Donald Trump's news conference Wednesday morning offered a study in presidential whiplash, giving the country a striking look at how the White House will change next week. "Historians are going to look at this period of Obama's farewell and Trump's press conference — they're almost companion pieces in different styles," said Douglas Brinkley, a presidential historian at Rice University. "Everyone says that Obama and Trump are 180 degrees different and you can see why."

Associated Press: Trump's pick to be top diplomat breaks with him in key ways
<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/8732a6db116146b78e922d1dc0893f1e/trumps-pick-be-top-diplomat-breaks-him-key-ways>

Rex Tillerson's foreign policy doesn't sound a lot like Donald Trump's. At his confirmation hearing Wednesday, the former Exxon Mobil CEO selected by Trump for secretary of state called Russia a "danger" and vowed to protect America's European allies. He rejected the idea of an immigration ban on Muslims. He treaded softly on the human rights records of key U.S. partners like Saudi Arabia. In the words of Sen. Bob Corker, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's GOP chairman, Tillerson "demonstrated that he's very much in the mainstream of foreign policy thinking." But doing so forced the former Exxon Mobil CEO to break with a variety of the president-elect's most iconoclastic statements on diplomacy and international security.

Associated Press: Trump's CIA choice to be questioned amid Russia hacking fury
<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/85cefe676354436ab5854511260fcf25/trumps-cia-choice-be-questioned-amid-russia-hacking-fury>

Donald Trump's pick to run the CIA faces a Senate confirmation hearing amid a testy standoff between the president-elect and the spy community. Rep. Mike Pompeo, a four-term conservative Kansas Republican, is a member of the House intelligence committee and also served on the partisan committee to investigate the deadly attack on a U.S. diplomatic post in Benghazi, Libya. He was expected to be on the receiving end of questions from a friendly group of fellow lawmakers Thursday. If confirmed as CIA director, Pompeo could be caught in the role of mending relations between Trump and intelligence officials. Trump has for the most part been dismissive of intelligence agencies' findings that Russia, specifically President Vladimir Putin, meddled in the 2016 U.S. election with the goal of electing Trump. The CIA is one of three main intelligence agencies that came to that conclusion. On Wednesday, Trump acknowledged Russia was responsible but speculated that intelligence agencies might have leaked to news organizations details about a classified briefing with him that included unsubstantiated allegations about his ties to Russia.

Associated Press: Newly leaked dossier on Trump circulated in DC for months
<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/a82309544e9e465fa2ad4f83e5a48540/newly-leaked-dossier-trump-circulated-dc-months>

It was a bombshell story, emerging on the eve of Donald Trump's first news conference as president-elect: U.S. intelligence officials had presented Trump with unsubstantiated claims that Russia had amassed compromising personal and financial allegations about him. The purported Russian efforts were described in a newly released and uncorroborated dossier produced in August. But they had circulated more widely in Washington in October — following early reports and opaque warnings from elected officials that something was afoot involving the Kremlin and Trump. In October, Mother Jones magazine described how a former Western spy — assigned to look into Trump's Russian ties for a private American firm — had presented his findings to the FBI in August. Those findings, the magazine said, were produced for political opposition research and said that Russian intelligence had compromised Trump during his visits to Moscow — information that, if true, could be used to blackmail him or undermine his presidency.

Associated Press: Republican-led Senate takes first step to repeal 'Obamacare'

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/3f772120f09747318cb4d0f38f4e93cb/republican-led-senate-takes-first-step-repeal-obamacare>

The Senate has passed a measure to take the first step forward on dismantling President Barack Obama's health care law, responding to pressure to move quickly even as Republicans and President-elect Trump grapple with what to replace it with. The nearly party-line 51-48 vote early Thursday came on a nonbinding Republican-backed budget measure that eases the way for action on subsequent repeal legislation as soon as next month. "We must act quickly to bring relief to the American people," said Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky. The House is slated to vote on the measure on Friday, though some Republicans there have misgivings about setting the repeal effort in motion without a better idea of the replacement plan.

National News:

Associated Press: US military: November fight with Taliban killed 33 civilians

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/6819ad68b67f4e9d8f5defb4313b8781/us-military-november-fight-taliban-killed-33-civilians>

The U.S. military in Afghanistan said on Thursday that its investigation into a November firefight with the Taliban in northern Kunduz province has shown that 33 civilians died in the raid during which U.S. troops fired on Afghan homes. The probe followed claims that civilian deaths resulted from airstrikes called in to support Afghan and U.S. forces who came under fire in the province's village of Buz-e Kandahari, which targeted two senior Taliban commanders. The two Taliban figures, responsible for violence in Kunduz the previous month, were killed in the operation. According to a U.S. military statement, the investigation "determined, regretfully, that 33 civilians were killed and 27 wounded" as troops responded to fire from "Taliban who were using civilian houses as firing positions."

United Nations News:

CBS News: U.N. ambassador Power on Russia, Israeli settlements, what's next

<http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/un-ambassador-samantha-power-on-russia-israeli-settlements-whats-next/>

Ambassador Samantha Power has been the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations since 2013, where she has denounced atrocities committed by the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and criticized Russia for its repeated vetoes of U.N. resolutions on the conflict. Power, who will leave office with the rest of the Obama administration on January 20, joins "CBS This Morning" to discuss foreign policy and what she plans to do next.

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