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FYSA- DR-4241-SC 10.30.15 Media Monitoring Afternoon Report

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## NEWS CLIPS

SOUTH CAROLINA-DR-4241

10/30/2015

Afternoon

### Issues:

- None.

### Summary:

- **FEMA** urges SC flood survivors to get registered and stay persistent on their cases if they get a letter saying they're ineligible for benefits.
- Dorchester County sets special community meeting with **FEMA** on Nov. 10
- The Blythewood newspaper did a story on how the **FEMA** office is boosting local business here, including a thumbs-up quote from the food truck operator.
- Embark church's role in hosting a **FEMA** DRC in Orangeburg was featured in the Times and Democrat newspaper
- Fewer than 100 SC roads, bridges still closed, according to a
- Faith-based agencies important in flood recovery, Statehouse Report finds in its flood recovery story
- Last flood-affected golf course in Myrtle Beach area is reopening
- Volunteers form SC Helps website
- Atlanta publication looks at longterm flood survivors' ordeal; more than physical help will be needed
- South Carolina Policy Council disappointed in how quickly tax increases have been brought up in government discussions
- **FEMA** helped in a regional investigation that resulted in a raid Thursday of a Columbia brothel and rescue of possible sex trafficking victim, according to WIS TV 10.

### Analysis:

- The report contains both a story about state leaders seeing the silver lining of federal funds to fix damaged roads and an opinion piece complaining about state leaders using the flood as an opportunity to grab federal money and raise gas taxes for bad roads.

### Social Listening Analysis:

TOPICS FROM SOCIAL MEDIA:

- **FEMA**. Conversations around **FEMA** and flooding are minimal. There continue to be occasional mentions of **FEMA** registration within community pages as people encourage families requesting assistance to [register for disaster assistance](#) as an initial step.
- **Official messaging**. Messages about relief progress from official disaster relief and government agencies, such as [SBA](#), [SCDOT](#) and [counties](#) were shared throughout the day. Response from the public has been minimal,

although [one post from Governor Nikki Haley](#) from a recent Team South Carolina event has garnered a large amount of positive comments.

• **Community relief.** As volunteer groups look ahead to the weekend, they are sharing [continued needs for their planned activities](#) and recruiting additional volunteers to help. Many community relief activities are focused on providing needed [construction materials](#) and household items such as [appliances](#) and [furniture](#). Information about relief groups providing [assistance with rebuilding](#) has been circulating regularly on community pages as well.

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## Floods

### FEMA urging residents to apply for disaster aid, appeal denial letters

By Avery G. Wilks

[The State](#) (Columbia) Oct.30, 2015

Highlights

Spokesman: Nearly 72,000 registered with **FEMA** statewide

Spokesman: **FEMA** has dispersed roughly \$52.6 million for individuals

Spokesman: Residents shouldn't give up after receiving denial letters

COLUMBIA, SC — **Federal Emergency Management Agency** officials are still urging residents affected by October's flooding to apply for disaster aid and not to give up if they are denied.

Carl Henderson, a **FEMA** spokesman, said nearly 72,000 people across South Carolina have registered with **FEMA** after the historic flooding in early October. **FEMA** has already dispersed roughly \$52.6 million to individuals and homeowners, Henderson said.

**FEMA** has reviewed and made a decision on almost 96 percent of the more than 57,000 inspections conducted, Henderson said. But residents shouldn't be discouraged by a denial letter, he said, adding that **FEMA** may issue a denial if it doesn't have the necessary information or paperwork to make a decision.

"That's not the final word," Henderson said.

Individuals have 60 days to appeal a **FEMA** denial letter, Henderson said. He added that **FEMA** representatives are available over the phone and in person at **FEMA** disaster recovery centers to explain denial letters and walk them through the appeal process.

**FEMA** has disaster recovery centers open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. seven days a week in Richland County libraries on Garners Ferry Road, Assembly Street and in Eastover as well as at the Temple of Faith Bible Way Church in Gadsden, Henderson said.

**FEMA**'s Lexington County centers are at libraries at 5440 Augusta Road in Lexington and 6251 St. Andrews Road in Irmo. Find the closest center online at **FEMA.gov/disaster-recovery-centers**.

Residents can apply for **FEMA** disaster aid at 800-621-3362 or at [disasterassistance.gov](http://disasterassistance.gov). The deadline to apply is Dec. 4.

## Council, FEMA to hold public meeting for flood victims

Summerville Journal Scene

Thursday, October 29, 2015

County council is encouraging all flood victims — homeowners and business owners — to attend a special community meeting next month with the **Federal Emergency Management Agency**.

The meeting is set for 7 p.m. Nov. 10 in council chambers, located at 500 North Main Street in Summerville.

**FEMA** representatives will be joined by representatives from the S.C. Emergency Management Division and Small Business Administration, who will answer disaster relief-related questions and discuss information on assistance, deadlines, denials and appeals.

The deadline to apply for **FEMA** assistance is Dec. 4. Applications can be filled out on the agency's website or by calling 800-621-**FEMA**.

The county website has additional information on flood assistance.

## FEMA Office Boosts Business in Town

By Barbara Ball

The Independent Voice of Blythewood & Fairfield County, October 29, 2015

[Photo: **FEMA** employees temporarily headquartered at Blythewood's CSC building order lunch from Scottie's Café food truck, one of several Blythewood businesses enjoying a boost in business while **FEMA** is in town. **FEMA** employees Paul Peterson of Connecticut, left, and Marcie Roth of Washington, D.C., purchase lunch from Scottie's server Melissa Letrick. (Photo/Barbara Ball)]

BLYTHEWOOD (Oct. 29, 2015) – While severe flooding in South Carolina brought death and devastation to many parts of the state, the aftermath of recovery and rebuilding is bringing business to Blythewood. That business is the result of **FEMA** setting up its temporary joint field office for the entire state in Blythewood's CSC building on Oct. 12.

After searching the state for a location with proximity to the state government offices and enough space to house 700 employees and access to major transportation arteries, nearby hotels, restaurants and other services, the mega emergency management agency settled on Blythewood.

Marcie Roth of Washington, D.C., and a member of the team scouting potential locations for **FEMA**, said Blythewood offered everything it was looking for.

"We work through the General Services Administration to find appropriate locations and sometimes have to set up in shopping malls, vacant Wal-Mart stores and even in tents. This is the perfect location and we have this great facility," she said, motioning toward the CSC building and its surrounding landscaped campus. "It has ample parking and plenty of space inside for internal training. It doesn't have a cafeteria, but that's OK. We have Scotties."

Scotties' Café food truck and a number of others pull up to the building six days a week serving breakfast, lunch and snacks.

"It's been big business for us," said Scott Opolyn, owner of Scotties' Cafe whose staff serves breakfast, lunch and about 20 gallons of coffee a day to **FEMA** employees at the CSC location.

And he's not the only one benefiting from the new businesses in town. The hotels and other restaurants in town are also seeing an uptick in business from the **FEMA** presence. Blythewood Mayor J. Michael Ross said the town is happy that **FEMA** chose Blythewood for its temporary headquarters.

"We love having them here, and we want to accommodate them in any way we can. It's our goal that they enjoy their stay here in town while they do this very important work to help our state and citizens put their lives back in order," Ross said.

The **FEMA** field office is a state and federally coordinated operation that supports the recovery effort throughout the state in the counties where the president has declared disaster areas.

“**FEMA** is a funding organization,” Harry Skinner, an external affairs employee at the CSC location explained. “But this location is not where people can come to get individual help,” he emphasized. “We do not work directly with flood survivors. We have 22 different locations in the state where flood survivors can go for individual assistance. Our employees, at this location, provide overall management of **FEMA**’s disaster recovery efforts for the whole state.

“Our Operation here at CSC,” Skinner said, “is pretty much self-sufficient. We’ve brought with us all the usual departments a large company has such as IT, logistics, human resources, planning, finance and administration, accounting and staffing, all in one location. Plus,” he added, “we provide program support staff for individual assistance, public assistance and mitigation efforts out in the field.”

Skinner said **FEMA**’s field office has no timeline for how long it will be in operation in Blythewood. Asked if it could be months, he said, “As long as it takes. As we move ahead our footprint here will be reduced based on the needs of the state. We are very happy to be here in Blythewood. This location seems to be handling our needs very well,” Skinner said. “Our employees have felt warmly welcomed by Blythewood and by all of South Carolina.”

## Embark Church working with relief efforts in aftermath of storm

By DIONNE GLEATON T&D Staff Writer

[The Times and Democrat](#), Orangeburg, Oct. 30, 2015

Flooding impacted Orangeburg and surrounding counties to varying degrees two weeks ago, but the thread of commonality was the community's response in helping those in need. It is a need Orangeburg's Embark Church is continuing to meet in coordination with federal and local officials.

Embark Church, housed at the Orangeburg County YMCA, serves as a disaster recovery center, or DRC, where people can receive assistance.

Representatives from the South Carolina Emergency Management Division, the **Federal Emergency Management Agency**, the U.S. Small Business Administration and other public and private agencies are based at the center to discuss disaster assistance programs and help survivors find resources for recovery.

The Rev. Judd Jordan, pastor of Embark Church, said he is pleased the church has been able to work with **FEMA** officials to spread the word about assistance provided through both the center and the church.

“When **FEMA** came in, we were helping. One of the first things that we did was try to establish with **FEMA** as a church. This is an excellent opportunity to begin to help the community,” Jordan said.

“We’ve kind of seen ourselves somewhat in partnership with **FEMA** in order to broadcast their information over our social media streams as well as word of mouth,” he said.

DRC Manager Jan Freemond said the church has been doing a lot of outreach in terms of getting information out to the public about the center.

“A lot of us are not real excited about reaching out to the federal government sometimes. So when it comes through the church or other local agencies, it helps us tremendously in getting folks to understand where we are, what our hours are and what we’re trying to do,” Freemond said.

“We are here 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. seven days a week right now,” Freemond said. She said while individuals cannot call directly to the center, they can call the **FEMA** helpline at 800-621-3362.

It has been advised that flood survivors should, if possible, register with **FEMA** before visiting a recovery center. To register, they can go online any time to [DisasterAssistance.gov](http://DisasterAssistance.gov) or call the **FEMA** helpline. Help is available in most languages, and phone lines are open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week until further notice.

Jordan said the church has already donated “quite a bit of supplies”, including clothes and water, during the relief effort in partnership with the YMCA.

“The week after the flood, we collected items from all over parts of the city and consolidated all of those things at the Y. Then about 30 kids from our youth program came over and helped the YMCA distribute all that aid to various resources,” including the Salvation Army and Healing Species, Jordan said.

Rayshaunda Harris, a YMCA front desk associate, said the church and the Y have shared a fruitful relationship.

“We’re continuing to share as much information about any other resources as we possibly can. If anyone knows of any, they can call the Y or the **FEMA** line. Anyone at our desk should be able to tell people the **FEMA** number, the church number, or take down any information they have about other resources.”

Harris added, “If anyone needs to come to our YMCA to take showers and things of that nature, they can do that. We offer that resource so there are different things that we try to do.”

Army Sgt. First Class Steven Blankley, a member of Embark Church, said the key is networking to make sure the community is informed and helped. He said the church has been a big part of that mission.

“You can’t just stay inside your four walls and expect for (the) word to travel. With our social media folks at church, we’ve been able to reach out,” Blankley said.

He added, “I run the Army recruiting office here in town. When we hear about young men and women who are

displaced, I already know where to send them. There's no guessing game."

Freemond said the DRC has also formed a partnership with the Goodwill in Orangeburg to help assist flood victims.

"As long as an individual is registered with **FEMA** and we've determined what their need is, we can give them a voucher that they can take to Goodwill to get what they need without having to make a payment. That's one lovely way we're coordinating with somebody local," she said.

She said people have come to the DRC requesting items such as clothes, food and furniture. Embark Church will serve as a viable resource for those needing assistance, Freemond said.

"When Rev. Jordan and I started talking, that's why I saw this as a natural partnership. Locally is how we find the most effective outreach," she noted.

Jordan said providing for the community's needs will go far beyond helping flood victims and be an ongoing venture.

"That is where a local church and the YMCA, too, can be helpful. Even after **FEMA**'s gone, there is still going to be an ongoing need in the community. After the initial wave of giving, there is a sustained effort that must be carried forward," he said.

"And, I know that helping the community is an important part of the mission of the YMCA, too."

For more information about resources, individuals may call the YMCA at 803-268-9622 or Embark Church at 803-813-0010. The church can also be reached via its website at [embark-church.org](http://embark-church.org) or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/EmbarkChurch/>.

## **Milestone reached: Fewer than 100 roads, bridges closed following historic flooding**

[Hilton Head Island Packet](#), Oct. 30, 2015

Ninety-nine roads and bridges closed. On an ordinary day, it would be a major disaster. Given what happened a month ago, it feels like great progress.

After a "1,000-year" rain soaked South Carolina from Charleston to Greenville, dropping 2 feet of rain in 24 hours in some places, the state was faced with hundreds of washouts, damage and standing floodwater on roadways. On Oct. 5, more than 560 roads and bridges were closed to drivers throughout the rain event area, including 75 miles of Interstate 95.

Now, after thousands of man hours in long shifts by Department of Transportation and National Guard crews, the department has moved under the 100-closure mark. Friday morning's report showed 69 roads and 30 bridges still closed, 11 more expected to open by the end of Oct. 31.

Another 27 should be re-opened by Nov. 26, leaving 61 particularly difficult fixes classified as "after Nov. 26" or simply "undetermined" and "unknown".

## **S.C. roads, bridges closed by flood dip below 100**

By CASSIE COPE

[The State](#) (Columbia), Oct. 30, 2015

### **Highlights**

More than 400 roads and bridges re-opened since flooding earlier this month

In Richland County, 37 roads and bridges remain closed, down from a peak of 133

In Lexington County, 11 roads and bridges remain closed

Only 99 roads and bridges remain closed across South Carolina on Friday morning after historic flooding washed out roadways.

In hardest-hit Richland County, 37 roads remain closed, down from a peak of 133.

Transportation Department crews have been working 12-hour shifts in recovery areas on road repairs.

Transportation Department staff have done a magnificent job, said Department of Transportation Commission chairman Jim Rozier of Berkeley County.

The amount of damage done to roads and bridges during the flooding was overwhelming, he said. For example some bridges appeared fine, "but there wasn't anything holding them up" because everything had been washed out underneath.

Rozier applauded interim Transportation Department Secretary Christy Hall for pulling road crews from counties that did not suffer during the storm to help with to counties that had damage to roads and bridges. "It's been unbelievable to me the amount that they've gotten done," he said.

Hall has been appointed by Gov. Nikki Haley to become Transporation secretary. But she must be confirmed by the state Senate.



## Fewer than 100 roads, bridges remain closed in SC

[The Associated Press](#), October 30, 2015

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Fewer than 100 roads and bridges remain closed in South Carolina following this month's historic rains.

The Department of Transportation reported Friday that 99 roads and bridges remain closed. That's down from 541 at the height of the storm Oct. 5.

The storm dumped more than 2 feet of rain in some areas of the state and caused extensive flooding from the coast to the Midlands.

The department said while all interstates are open, 10 primary routes – state or federal highways – remain closed in areas.

Most of the closings now are on secondary roads.

## NEWS: Thousands continue to help in flood recovery

By Bill Davis

[Statehouse Report](#), 10/30/2015

The flood that soaked South Carolina this month was so massive that there's not a good adjective to describe its size. Now, the recovery looks more like a patchwork quilt than a safety net from the perspective of state Disaster Recovery Coordinator Kevin Shwedo.

"We've got everybody coming to help," said Shwedo, the state's head of the Department of Motor Vehicles who has been tasked to lead a pop-up state team of professionals to deal with the recovery. "The federal government with **FEMA** and the Small Business Administration, state government, counties, cities, non-governmental organizations, and even bumblebees and grasshoppers."

Umm ... bumblebees and grasshoppers?

Shwedo was referring to faith-based rescuers: teams of trained disaster responders from the Southern Baptist Convention who wear yellow shirts (bumblebees) and responders from the United Methodist Committee on Relief who wear green (grasshoppers).

Shwedo praised the bumblebees and grasshoppers for always being visible and available at disaster response centers throughout the state, and for being able to act quicker than some government arms, tied at times by red tape.

Sue Harmon, operations director for the South Carolina Baptist Convention's disaster relief office, said that while her organization doesn't track total numbers of volunteers its bigger sister has provided in South Carolina, it does track total volunteer days.

As of close of day Thursday, the convention had contributed 4,279 volunteer days. But, Harmon added that number represents many volunteers pulling multiple days, and it changes constantly. So far, the convention has welcomed responders from as far away as Oklahoma, she said, and expects to welcome more from states hit hard by Hurricane Sandy. "Canada's coming next week," Harmon said.

**FEMA** Administrator Craig Fugate said recently that the agency "has the authority necessary to lean forward and leverage the entire emergency management team in response and recovery efforts. This team includes not only government but also the private sector, non-profits, and citizens themselves."

**FEMA** spokesman Jim Homstad said close to 1,300 agency personnel are on the ground in South Carolina, responding to assistance applications from over 70,000 residents spread out over 24 designated counties, with residents of Richland County comprising over one-fifth of that number.

So far, Homstad said that **FEMA** has approved more than \$53 million in grants across South Carolina so far. As for reports that families in mobile homes having an even harder time of getting approved for assistance, Homstad said that all cases are dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

It's tough to gauge how many non-governmental and faith-based groups have shown up to help out South Carolina, according to Tim Ervolina, chief executive officer of the United Way Association of South Carolina.

Ervolina's organization's Columbia office this week served as a rallying point for the various groups, but had to keep getting chairs as the number swelled and swelled.

And the state is going to need all the help it can get, according to Ervolina, because of the scope of the storm's damage across the state, and for the amount of time he expects it will take for South Carolina to rebound fully.

While neither **FEMA** nor the state have released a damage estimate in the wake of the flooding, unofficial estimates have hit the \$1 billion mark, according to several sources.

"This is going to be a 'deep ask,'" said Ervolina, explaining that it was vital for those who already donate to charitable organizations to maintain regular contributions and dig deeper to give even more at this crucial time.

Ervolina caused a storm last week in this publication when he said **FEMA** was more focused on denying claims

than filling them. This week, Ervolina did not change his position, but added that he was trying to “tamp down expectations” of a speedy recovery paid in full by the federal government.

Shwedo said he saw it differently — that the federal workers were “good people bent on helping,” and that persistence will be the key going forward. Both said that residents impacted by the flood needed to keep going back to **FEMA** repeatedly and not be deterred by initial rejections of claims.

Shwedo said it’s even been tough on him just learning a “whole new language” of **FEMA** nomenclature and that the inspectors will help residents jump through what Ervolina called the agency’s “narrow hoop of proof.”

**FEMA**, which took a beating for its response to Hurricane Katrina, has changed its scope and mission, according to Ervolina, who reminded everyone that the agency has new restrictions placed on it these days.

## **Aberdeen Country Club reopening Friday, the last area course to do so following flooding**

By Alan Blondin

[Myrtle Beach Sun News/Myrtle Beach Online](#), Oct. 29, 2015

Highlights

The course on S.C. 9 in Longs has been closed since Oct. 2

The flooding of the Waccamaw River prolonged its recovery

The front nine of The Witch was also hard hit and reopened on Oct. 23

With the reopening of Aberdeen Country Club in Longs on Friday, the Grand Strand will have its full complement of approximately 100 golf courses for the first time since record rainfall hit the area early this month.

Aberdeen was the course most impacted by rainfall from Oct. 1-5 that was registered at 2 feet in some areas of the Strand, including Longs, by the National Weather Service in Wilmington, N.C., and is the last course to reopen following flooding.

The course drains into the Waccamaw River, which crested well above flood levels several days after the rain, so parts of the course were holding water for more than three weeks.

Aberdeen’s first scheduled tee time Friday is 8 a.m.

Only 18 of the course’s 27 holes will be open – the Highlands and Meadows nines. The Woodlands nine is still being prepared by workers, who are dealing with areas of standing water and a bridge in need of repair, and is expected to open in the coming days.

Aberdeen head pro Steve Shaffer said the course did not experience any structural damage despite three-plus weeks of flooding.

Water reached the top step of the clubhouse but did not enter the building. Pro shop merchandise was placed on high shelves or was transported to nearby sister course Long Bay Club as a precaution, and carts were driven to a high point of the property and were undamaged. The clubhouse was thoroughly cleaned during the down time.

“People will not see any effects from the flooding at Aberdeen Country Club,” Shaffer said in a release. “Our staff has done an excellent job maintaining the course, and we look forward to seeing golfers out again.”

The majority of the Strand’s courses reopened by Oct. 7 and nearly all were open by Oct. 9, though the front nine of The Witch on S.C. 544 in Conway just reopened last Friday.

The front nine sits in a swamp that is close to the Waccamaw River and could not be accessed by golf cart for a couple weeks. Players were able to ride fairways for a few days this week, as fairways were drier than some low-lying cart path areas. The course was overseeded for the winter Monday.

Already a nature preserve of sorts with a myriad of birds and wildlife, the front nine of The Witch now appears to have more alligators than before the storm. “I saw more than I’ve seen in the past,” Witch head pro Randy Laney said. “They may have floated our way.”

## **All Grand Strand golf courses now open after flood**

[Associated Press](#), Posted: Oct 30, 2015

LONGS, S.C. (AP) - It's another sign that South Carolina is recovering from this month's historic rains.

Local media outlets report that the Aberdeen Country Club in the community of Longs in Horry County is reopening Friday. All of the 100 or so golf courses in the Myrtle Beach area are open.

Aberdeen was the hardest-hit golf course in this month's storms and was in with about 2 feet of rain. The course drains into the Waccamaw River which crested well above flood level leaving parts of the course under water for weeks.

Only 18 of the course's 27 holes are reopening. Repairs are still underway on nine holes at the country club.

## **State seeks a silver lining from recent floods**

By Tim Smith

[Greenville News](#), October 30, 2015

COLUMBIA - Before record rains in South Carolina forced the closure of 541 roads and bridges, officials estimated the annual tab for fixing the state's crumbling infrastructure at between \$400 million and \$1.4 billion.

Now that the flooding has spawned a massive repair operation and expectations of federal financial help, some are wondering if the repairs will reduce the overall maintenance need and offer a silver lining of sorts to the disaster.

After all, some argue, if local, state and federal coffers are going to pour hundreds of millions of dollars worth of work on the state's roadways, won't that lessen the overall infrastructure need?

State highway commissioners and lawmakers who have been involved in the debate over road funding told The Greenville News that answering the question is not as easy as it seems.

Jim Rozier, chairman of the state Department of Transportation Commission, said he doesn't know how to answer the question because damage estimates are not yet known and may not be complete before Thanksgiving.

"It may cost more money to come forward," he said of flood repairs. "But I'm not sure that more money is going to solve our problems with maintenance. I just don't know."

State Transportation Secretary Christy Hall told senators this week that while the federal government largely will reimburse the state for the damage caused by the flood, it will not pay for costs not tied directly to the rainfall.

"This is not a betterment program," she said of flood repairs covered by federal aid. "It is intended to get it to a safe and serviceable condition. And only replace if it's beyond repair."

She said much of the damage to bridges, for instance, is to the approaches. So the roadway will be repaired, but the bridge, which may have been deficient before the floods, will not be replaced or repaired unless it can be proven that the flood damaged the structure.

Mike Wooten, vice chairman of the DOT board, said the state's infrastructure is damaged in ways that will not be seen for a year or more.

Because water covered roads for so long, it saturated the base and material underneath the pavement. Because vehicles continued to travel over the roads with water in that material, he said, the roads' foundation was damaged in ways that will take time to show.

"Those improvements are fixing what got broken and fixing what is immediately identifiable with the flood," he said. "The problem is, a year from now, those roads that have been inundated and traveled on are going to tear all to pieces and have potholes like you've never seen before. You can't prove that to our federal partners. So by that time, they will all have gone back to where they came from and it's on us."

While the federal government will pick up the tab for much of the immediate damage, a significant portion will be left to the state. The ice storm that hit the state almost two years ago left South Carolina with a bill of about \$160 million, even after federal reimbursements, he said.

"The ice storm was a sprint," he said. "What we're dealing with in this flood is a marathon."

Rep. Gary Simrill, a Rock Hill Republican who chaired a special House panel last year that drafted a plan to increase funding for roads, said he does not think the flood repairs will reduce the state's overall infrastructure needs.

"The fact that we didn't address roads earlier caused more damage, not less," he said. "So the extent of the repair and replacement is higher. The other component is we are so far behind in infrastructure because of the lack of funding coming into the state coupled with the growth."

Just how far behind was punctuated this week with a release by the South Carolina Alliance To Fix Our Roads, which pointed to two national reports this year that found drivers in South Carolina's urban centers are paying more for bad roads through vehicle repairs and delays caused by congestion.

Roads and bridges that are deficient, congested or lack desirable safety features cost South Carolina motorists \$3 billion statewide annually because of higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes and congestion-related delays, according to the alliance.

"Neglected maintenance and erosion across the state, and particularly in the urban areas, combined to create a real crisis – and that was before a thousand-year rain event flooded South Carolina, causing the closure of more than 500 roads and bridges," said Bill Ross, executive director of the alliance. "We already faced an almost \$43 billion shortfall in funds needed for highway, bridge and transit systems over the next 25 years and now our citizens and public infrastructure suffered unprecedented damages from the recent storm."

Others note that many counties did not have flood-damaged roads and bridges because they did not receive the same amount of rainfall. So there will be no flood repairs on their bridges or roads and no reduced maintenance need there.

Sen. Ray Cleary, a Georgetown County Republican who has pushed for road funding for years, said that damage to the state's roads from the last ice storm was made worse because of the poor condition of the roads, allowing water



to get into cracks and freeze, causing more damage.

He believes much the same will happen with the flood.

"It's not going to be any cheaper," he said of the state's overall maintenance bill. "It's going to definitely be more expensive, but will the feds help us a little bit with it? I don't know the answer to that either."

Simrill says a silver lining to the flood damage is that it may focus the state more on its infrastructure.

The House earlier this year passed a plan to increase road funding, as well as change the way highway commissioners are appointed and a lure for local governments interested in taking over more local roads in the state's inventory. The bill is still pending in the Senate, which adjourned this summer without taking any action on that plan or competing Senate proposals.

"We can no longer put it off," Simrill said. "The lives of South Carolinians and others are at stake. We must act. That's the silver lining. It pushes the issue to the front. We don't want more lives lost and injuries to happen because our roadways are inferior."

## **DCTA member questions road designs in wake of flooding**

By Jenna-Ley Harrison

[Summerville Journal Scene](#), October 30, 2015

Requests for documents on county road projects sparked tension among members this month at a meeting for the Dorchester County Sales Tax Transportation Authority.

DCTA Chairman Marshall Murdaugh shut down newly appointed member Will Limehouse's repeated requests for access to Davis & Floyd's engineering plans for Dorchester and Bacons Bridge roads.

"I want to look at the plans, the drainage issues, the change orders," Limehouse said. "In looking...I can see if the roads were originally designed correctly."

Limehouse said his concerns stem from flooding issues both roads experienced when historic rainfall hit the state earlier this month.

"I keep hearing Dorchester Road is designed beautifully, but by that Saturday evening the road was closed and already flooded over," he said.

Fellow members of the DCTA told Limehouse during the meeting they believed he was trying to stir up trouble.

DCTA Vice Chairman Johnny Allston adjourned the meeting after telling Limehouse his questions on off-topic issues could be discussed later or he could see the plans at the DCTA office in Ridgeville. "He insisted on pursuing issues that did not apply to the DCTA agenda (that day) and were intended to disrupt the meeting," Allston said. "We need to concentrate our energies on getting the last two (road) projects completed instead of trying to advance our personal agenda and stir up hate and discontent."

However Limehouse said he was simply trying to do his duties as a DCTA member.

"My duty is to be part of this committee to oversee the projects. I have nothing to oversee or ask questions about. I've been neutered. All I can do is sit there (at meetings)."

According to an email Allston sent Limehouse in recent weeks, Limehouse or any other DCTA member is not even allowed to visit construction sites of projects.

"If everything's good what is there to cause dissension about?" he said. "I'm not saying anything's wrong, but it gives the appearance that (the committee) is trying to hide something, which makes me more inquisitive."

In August county council voted on whether to dissolve DCTA since most of the road projects, which the group was established to oversee, have been completed.

After much debate, council voted 4-3 to deny second reading of an ordinance on disbanding the group.

## **Volunteers Make Website to Coordinate Flood Help**

By Savannah Levins

[WLTX 19](#), CBS Columbia, October 30, 2015

IRMO, SC (WLTX)- When Irmo web developer Bryan Murdaugh was out helping families in his community recover from the floods, he noticed one big problem.

"It was chaos," he said. "There were a lot of people just driving around with hot meals in their cars, there were people going to help with demo and the demo was already done. And I said well, if we can close those gaps then a lot more people can be helped and a lot more people can help. So I said since I do software development, I have the skills to actually create closures for those loops."

He met another volunteer and church member Rocky Giglio, and a website called "SC Helps" was born.

"The website gave us a way to say 'OK, I need 10 people to do drywall removal at this home,'" Giglio said. "I could put in their contact information, get a way to reach the homeowner, get a crew out there, and close it off when it was done. So you can click the link 'I want to volunteer' and sort it by need, by area, and look and find something."

And victims can request help on the site as well.

"You can click the link 'I need help,'" Giglio said, "tell us what you need whether its food clothing housing whatever it is, and then we'll take that need, we'll review it and make sure we have all the contact information together to get a hold of you, and then match that to resources as they come."

Soon even more volunteers got on board, like Tequila Spears, who was relieved to find an effective way to coordinate meals.

"It got to the point where we were bringing so much food out there, that they were having to throw stuff away and no one wants to have to do that, especially at a time like this," she said. "Everyone wants to help, but you really need to organize those efforts to really make an impact."

The site has been live for almost three weeks, and Murdaugh says it will be around long term as victims continue to recover.

"I think really just knowing that we are a community," he said, "and that we'll always be community and a strong community, really makes every effort we put into this absolutely worth it."

You can also donate money on the website, which is registered as a 501(c)(3) non profit.

## **Charleston Mayoral Race: John Tecklenburg (Video)**

By Shawn Cabbagestalk

[WCBD News 2 NBC Charleston](#), October 30, 2015

CHARLESTON, SC — The historical Charleston mayoral race is less than a week away. Ginny Deerin, William Dudley Gregorie, Toby Smith, Leon Stavrinakis, John Tecklenburg and Maurice Washington are running to replace Charleston's mayor of 40 years, Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr.

Charleston Mayoral Race: John Tecklenburg There are not any more debates between the candidates so News 2's Carolyn Murray sat down with some of the front runners in the race. The first candidate up was businessman John Tecklenburg.

We asked him about what he plans to do about flooding and infrastructure in Charleston.

We will feature each candidate weeknights on News 2 and on Counton2.com

## **Myrtle Beach-area organizations need your help**

[Myrtle Beach Sun News/Myrtle Beach Online](#), Oct. 30, 2015

*(Excerpt from longer article; this was the only relevant portion)*

Donations: All 4 Paws storage building suffered extensive flooding and are in need of towels and blankets, XL and XXL crates, Dawn dish-washing detergent, HE laundry detergent, tall kitchen and 55-gallon garbage bags, Pine Sol, and paper towels. Items can be dropped off at: 708 Petigru Road, Pawleys Island. Due to the number of animals that were picked up by animal control during the flood, we anticipate the number of animals needing our help will be great this week. Please visit [All4PawsSC.org](#) to volunteer, adopt or foster.

## **It's time to rock around the clock, Winnsboro!**

By James Inabinet

[Winnsboro Herald Independent](#), Oct. 30, 2015

WINNSBORO — It's time to rock around the clock again, Winnsboro!

With the rain and flooding at the beginning of the month, Winnsboro's annual Rock Around the Clock festival was postponed and has now been combined with Pumpkin Fest.

Festivities will begin around 5 p.m. and continue through 11 p.m. Friday before picking back up Saturday. While the originally scheduled parade was cancelled, there will be plenty of activities in its place. Pumpkin Fest will include trick-or-treating and several food contests.

Following the Pumpkin Fest events, Rock Around the Clock will take over. Starting at 8 p.m., there will be a street dance. Although the originally scheduled band was booked for these dates, the Chamber of Commerce was able to bring back the Flashback Party Band.

Saturday's events will include a car and truck show which begins at 8 a.m. and will include several vehicles that have picked up national awards. The main stage will be rocking all day long and will feature local groups as well as school groups.

Some of the attractions will include arts and crafts vendors, an inflatable slide, Thomas the Choo Choo, and a free petting zoo next to The Herald Independent's office.

## **'The New Normal:' South Carolina Flood Victims Face Long Recovery**

By A. K. Stagers

Earlier this month, parts of South Carolina were ravaged by floods.

“We haven’t seen this level of rain in the Lowcountry in 1,000 years,” said Governor Nikki Haley.

The rains have slowed, the flooding has stopped, and rebuilding has begun. Schools are back in session, the water advisory has been lifted and people are now making the difficult, and often longer, commutes back to work.

For those who have lost everything or close to it, there are immediate needs like food, shelter, clothing. For parents with infants and small children, they need diapers and baby necessities. Those who live on farms need help caring for their livestock. For others, who may not have lost their homes completely, there is the challenge of finding ways to pay for flood damage when insurance will not pay.

**FEMA** has already begun assessing damages and many are hoping that they will be eligible for assistance to get back to some semblance of normal. Malcolm Bevel, MSPH, a Ph. D. student in Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the University of South Carolina, has been working with his fraternity, Omega Psi Phi, to rebuild communities and provide for the immediate needs of flood victims.

“I believe that the people who lost everything may still have a sense of hope after the storms,” he says. “Despite the unfortunate loss of some lives and physical possessions, the unity that people showed in the midst of chaos was unquestionably powerful. It can allow people who lost everything to be optimistic about recovering physically, mentally, and spiritually from this natural disaster. However, it will take more time than what we think for people to fully recover.”

Bevel goes on to say that people will need more than just the donations as time passes.

“People will need more than physical items to recover from the floods. Social support is a necessity in these times of despair, so sending prayers and good vibes to the victims of the floods is just one simple way to provide for those in need,” he says. “Months from now, people will need social support from the surrounding communities, faith groups, and others who can just spend just a few minutes out of their busy schedule to make sure that those with less are recovering as best as humanly possible.”

As with many tragedies, when mainstream media bows out from covering the story, the real pain sets in for victims who often feel forgotten. This will lead to feelings of stress, depression, anxiety and even post traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. For people who have lost everything and were living on fixed incomes with little access to health care, being treated for these chronic conditions will also provide a challenge.

“The unfortunate truth is that poor people and people of color will be more severely impacted and for much longer due to the fact that they did not have the necessary resources in place to cushion the severe blows of the flooding prior to the storm even reaching our great city,” says Bevel. “Local and statewide policies need to be looked at closely so then history won’t repeat itself, especially not for those in underserved communities.”

South Carolina residents in these communities may be able to seek professional assistance and mental health services from local colleges and universities, particularly HBCUs.

“I believe HBCUs are uniquely suited to provide support to students who have experienced traumatic events including natural disasters,” says Dr. Larry J. Walker of Morgan State University. “The strong sense of communalism can help students who have experienced a singular or multiple natural disasters. It is important that post-secondary institutions, particularly HBCUs, provide new and returning students with comprehensive mental health services. In addition, it is critical that HBCUs provide workshops, webinars, etc. to dispel myths regarding mental health. Based on my research institutions that support students exposed to traumas, including natural disasters are more likely to have higher retention rates.”

Dr. Walker points out specific resources for South Carolina residents.

“Claflin and SCSU have counseling centers that help students cope with certain traumatic events,” he says. “Mental health practitioners play an important role counseling students juggling family, school and peer relationships. It is also important for administrators, faculty and staff to understand that natural disasters happen frequently throughout the United States. Thus, taking a proactive approach could help students excel in the classroom.”

Adults who bear the weight of rebuilding and the financial struggles will not be the only ones needing support in care as time goes on and people recover emotionally from the floods in South Carolina. Careful attention must also be paid to the children who’ve suffered as well.

We tend to think of children of having strong resiliency, but Tyrone Blackburn, Educational Specialist and Doctoral candidate in Cognition and Instruction, says that in adults who must bear the weight of caretaker, the initial stress response can be immediate, but children may have a more delayed response.

“The initial psychological responses are those that will unusually manifest themselves in the first 4-8 months after,” he says. “Where long-term manifestations [are] around a year and can be lifelong. Thus, long-term treatment is vital for those that are in need. Research suggests that long term difficulties following a natural disaster are most likely

to be seen among children who had threats to their physical safety, thought they might die during the disaster, report that they were very upset during the disaster, lost their belongings or house as a result, had to relocate in the aftermath, and attended schools following the disaster that had multiple schedule changes, double sessions or a lot of disruptions.”

Parents can expect to see symptoms that are similar to adult disaster victims, says Blackburn.

“Yes, PTSD will be an issue parents will need to be aware and concerned about,” he says. “Children who tend to be anxious are those most likely to develop post-trauma symptomatology following a natural disaster. Research suggests that children who’ve had a pre-existing anxiety disorder prior to a natural disaster are at greater risk of developing PTSD symptoms.”

He adds further that minority of children may be at risk of PTSD as well.

“Symptoms can exhibited over an extended period of time,” he says. “Symptoms may include re-experiencing the disaster during play and/or dreams; anticipating or feeling that the disaster is happening again, avoiding reminders of the disaster, general numbness to emotional topics, and increased arousal symptoms such as inability to concentrate and startle reactions. Although rare, some adolescents may also be at increased risk of suicide if they suffer from serious mental health problems like PTSD or depression.”

Even if children have missed quite a bit of school due to clean-up activities, Blackburn says parents shouldn’t worry so much about retention.

“Student retention usually isn’t a problem as long as they receive the proper services to help them cope,” he says. “Relocation is usually the biggest factor in student retention. Most families are displaced after a natural disaster. Thus, the new school district may not have the resources to assist students.”

However, if students are able to return to their home school, academically they should be fine.

Hopefully, as time passes, the nation will continue to remember those affected and offer support and kind words to those in South Carolina. Unfortunately, this was but one of many major tragedies this year from which residents are still healing.

## **Minor flooding expected in Charleston today**

By Dave Munday

[Charleston Post and Courier](#), Oct 30 2015

Some minor flooding in downtown Charleston is expected around high tide this morning.

A coastal flood advisory is in effect from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., according to the National Weather Service.

The tide in Charleston Harbor should peak around 10:47 a.m. between 7.1 and 7.4 feet, which is lower than Thursday.

Today should be sunny, with a high near 75, according to the weather service.

Saturday should be more cloudy, with a high near 75.

Sunday should be mostly cloudy, with a high near 77 and a 30 percent chance of rain.

## **Are Flooding And Crazy 'King Tides' In The Southeast Proof Of Climate Change?**

Eric Mack. Contributor

[Forbes.com](#), Oct. 29, 2015

Scientists have often run into a problem when it comes to communicating with the public about climate change because climate is about larger, longer-term, macro-level patterns. That’s different than what we call weather, which is what is happening at any given moment — there’s a big hurricane in the Pacific, it’s sunny in New York, it’s flooding in South Carolina, etc.. Typically you can’t point to a single weather event like Hurricane Patricia and say “this storm was caused by climate change.”

Instead, scientists are more likely to say something less definitive (but more accurate) such as “we think that climate change might be a contributing factor to the increasing levels of intensity and regularity with which we are seeing and most likely will continue to see storms like Hurricane Patricia.”

This is how scientists talk because this is how science works. Correlation is not causation. Climate is not weather. Science is nuance and the world is complicated, so explaining how it works shouldn’t be as simple as “that storm is climate change.”

And yet, to look at the serious flooding that happened along the southeastern coast of the United States this week could be an eerie and disconcerting glimpse into the future — a future in which our coastlines are being altered by, yes, climate change.

Tuesday morning’s high tide in Charleston, S.C. peaked at over eight-and-a-half feet — that’s a foot-and-a-half more than was predicted for the so-called “king tide” or normally occurring highest tide of the year. Those “supermoons” you’ve been hearing about play a role in this, as do winds and currents, but there’s another increasingly



undeniable factor that's new to the scene: sea level rise.

Regular inundation of coastal areas by king tides is now competing with hurricane storm surges from previous decades for water level records. This week in Savannah, Georgia, the water level crested at 10.43 feet, just shy of the record of 10.87 feet set when Hurricane Nine made landfall there in 1947. The Washington Post also reports local residents believe this week's flooding in South Carolina was worse than the 1,000-year flood ordeal from earlier this year.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency's web site, today's king tides are a glimpse of future sea levels along our coasts:

"As time goes by, the water level reached now during a king tide will be the water level reached at high tide on an average day."

So climate isn't weather, but king tides aren't really weather either. What they are, however, is a little local window into sea levels, which are very much connected to climate and climate change. It's still not right to say that climate change is flat-out causing these tidal floods, but it's one of the clearest tangible examples scientists can point to and say that long sentence about how it's a contributing factor and — most importantly — it's almost certainly making things worse, perhaps permanently.

## **Lawmakers Using Flood as Excuse to Raise Taxes, Grab Federal Money**

by Ashley Landess

[TheNerve.org](http://TheNerve.org), Oct. 30, 2015, 6 a.m.

'Let's take this tragedy and turn it into an opportunity'

We saw it coming, of course. But honestly, I didn't think it would happen so fast.

No, no. I'm not talking about the Cubs tanking (It's 2016, people – that's our year!). I'm referring to how quickly politicians and government officials went from lip-service compassion for flood victims to calling for a massive tax increase to "fix" the problem.

It hasn't yet been a month since the historic flood costs many South Carolinians their homes, businesses, personal property, and in a few cases their lives. Government officials do not know what it will cost to repair roads, bridges, and dams. Shell-shocked citizens don't know what it will cost them to replace property, rebuild homes, and save their businesses.

The public has not been given any sort of timeline or priority list, or even a process to determine all of that. And as SCPC policy analyst Shane McNamee's analysis reveals, the process by which South Carolina will request, accept, and spend federal disaster relief is so flawed that misspending and even corruption are almost a given. At the very least, the cost to South Carolinians will be enormous – around 25 percent of individual and state aid will have to come from us.

Despite all the unanswered questions, many legislative leaders, local government officials, and transportation officials have launched an aggressive campaign with only one theme: now is the time to raise taxes. That push was in full drive this week.

DOT Commissioner Mike Wooten spoke to the Florence Rotary Club, and according to the news story he "strongly refuted any notion of fiscal mismanagement" by the DOT, complained that South Carolina has the lowest gas tax in nation (not a word about our 14th-highest income tax), and called for an increase "in the range of 20 cents per gallon."

But the most interesting point made by the DOT's Vice Chairman was that "the longer you wait to preserve the road, then you get into rehab, and then you get into total reconstruction, and your cost goes straight up from there."

True, and yet the state devotes too few dollars toward maintenance and repair. Meanwhile, at the meeting of the board of the State Infrastructure Bank, where billions of dollars flow away from maintenance and repair to the borrowing of new money for new construction, Rep. Chip Limehouse (who is on the board, which is largely controlled by legislative leaders), remarked that "my thought process was let's take this tragedy and turn it into an opportunity for more money for the DOT."

Pretty clear. Limehouse also said that "without the [Infrastructure Bank] board, you don't have the money at DOT to do anything."

The STIB is not supposed to be a primary funding source for roads, but Limehouse is in effect saying that it is, even though it undertakes no maintenance or repair. Rather, it funds new and expansion projects in politically influential counties (10 out of 46 counties have gotten the vast majority of STIB funds).

We still have no plan from anyone on priorities, cost, and process for flood repairs, but Limehouse continued his speech to defend his colleague on the STIB board, Senate President Pro Tempore and Finance Chairman Hugh Leatherman, who has control over just about every board that governs transportation, from the Finance Committee to the Infrastructure Bank board, to the Joint Transportation Review Committee that nominates the DOT commissioners



(Leatherman's son-in-law, John Hardee, is on the DOT commission – and as The Nerve revealed earlier this year, Hardee's company also has a contract with the DOT).

Senator Leatherman has arguably been the chief driver of the tax increase. He has openly stated: "I'm going to get money for DOT any way I can get it. The flooding event is one thing. The DOT's needed money for a long time."

Translation: the federal disaster relief offers an opportunity to draw down untold amounts of money – whatever the cost to struggling South Carolinians.

And make no mistake, there will be a cost. The federal dollars come with strings, and that 25 percent match required from the state will hurt. Right now, dollars are already being spent – how much we don't know. The governor has not made her agreement with the federal government available yet to the public. We know less than ever about the cost of our road repair, but we're already seeing the direction in which politicians are headed and it's not toward the systemic reform that would force accountability and transparency on a system that is almost entirely out of citizens' control.

Ashley Landess is president of the South Carolina Policy Council, The Nerve's parent organization

## Columbia brothel busted in major Federal investigation

By Derry London

WIS TV 10, NBC Columbia, Oct 30, 2015

Federal authorities reported that a suspected brothel was busted in Columbia, and a possible victim of international sex trafficking was rescued Thursday.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (\*ICE) along with Homeland Security Investigations (\*HSI) conducted a 13-state operation Thursday dubbed "Operation Safe Haven," targeting a network of illegal brothels that share in trafficking Hispanic **FEM**Ales across the southeastern United States.

The investigation was conducted by the Department of Homeland Security Joint Task Force, involving investigators from not only ICE and HSI, but also US Customs and Border Protection, **FEMA**, and multiple state and local law enforcement agencies.

One location suspected to be a brothel within this network was found here in Columbia, where one suspect and one victim were secured by Federal Agents. Authorities have not identified the exact location or identity of the suspect at this time.

Anyone who suspects instances of human trafficking is encouraged to call the HSI tip line at 1-866-DHS-2-ICE (866-347-2423) or the Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888. Online tips can be submitted at [www.ice.gov/tipline](http://www.ice.gov/tipline). Anonymous calls and tips are always welcome.

Additional brothel arrests happened in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, and North Carolina.

Authorities say traffickers within this organization worked as independent operators to coordinate the movement and delivery of women for illegal sexual purposes.

In a five-count indictment was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Georgia, at least one victim discovered during the 15-month investigation was identified as a juvenile while she was trafficked.

The initial investigation started in July of 2014 in Savannah, where Special Agents with Homeland Security identified a loosely affiliated organization that coordinated the illegal movement of Hispanic **FEM**Ales from Mexico and Central America to destinations across the southeastern U.S. Some were underage teenage girls.

"As previous investigations have shown, and 'Operation Safe Haven' again confirms, the sex trafficking of foreign women in the United States is done by loosely organized criminal networks who have little, if any regard for the women they victimize," said Special Agent in Charge of HSI Atlanta Nick S. Annan. "This investigation identified women victimized through fraud, force and coercion, including underage teens. To the criminals behind these illegal enterprises, these women are just pieces of meat used to pull a quick profit and then discarded or passed on to the next trafficker down the line."

29 were arrested Thursday, facing charges that include conspiracy to transport a person in interstate commerce for prostitution, or conspiracy to participate in the sex trafficking of a minor.

Nine suspects remain at large, and three customers were also charged with promoting the prostitution operations.

The victims identities are being protected while medical treatment is provided to them all, and Homeland Security is providing all the basic needs for their health and well-being, in addition to further Visa considerations based upon cooperation with the investigations.

"Human sex trafficking is a cancer that we must cut out, and then aggressively fight with all of our resources," said U.S. Attorney Michael Moore. "Sometimes the trafficking victims are kidnapped and forced into sexual servitude through violence. Other times the victims are lured with the promise of a better life, and then held hostage by predators who literally financially imprison them or intimidate them with threats of harm or shame to them or their families. No

matter the circumstances that brought these women into sexual servitude, they are victims. And whether the weapons used by the traffickers cause physical, mental or emotional harm, they are predators, and we will track them down no matter the cost."

"This operation highlights exactly what the Secretary charted us to do through these task forces," said Dave Marwell, Director of the Joint Task Force for Investigations. "By strategically applying the broad resources of DHS against a priority investigation, criminal organizations don't stand a chance. We will continue to focus our efforts to ensure we are dismantling criminal organizations that traffic women into the U.S. for the purposes of sexual slavery."