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To:
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The Post and Courier

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Monday, November 24, 2014

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Charleston, S.C. \$1.00

Findings may spur S.C. coroner reforms

Victims advocate seeks accountability in wake of unreported child deaths

BY CYNTHIA ROLDAN
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COLUMBIA — A victims advocate is hoping a legislative audit that found 152 child deaths from 2009 to 2013 had gone unreported to the state will shock lawmakers into passing a law holding coroners accountable.

Laura Hudson, vice chairwoman

of the state's Child Fatality Advisory Committee, plans to push for a bill during the upcoming legislative session beginning in January that would penalize coroners who fail to report child deaths. Hudson said she also wants lawmakers to require every county's coroner to be a full-time employee with additional training and oversight.

Poll



Should the state Legislature pass tougher laws to hold coroners more accountable for reporting child deaths? Go to postandcourier.com/polls to vote.

"The only way I know to hit incompetence straight on is to make it difficult to be elected to that level in the first place," Hudson said. "The only way I know how to do that is to raise the professional standards for people who run for coroner and to put profes-

sional standards on them once they're in. I think that will go a long way in fixing a lot of things, not just in child fatalities."

Coroners attributed the unreported child deaths to a variety of factors, some out of their control. The trend has continued this year, with an additional 24 of the deaths.

The audit, released in October, was meant to delve more deeply into the troubled state Department of Social Services. But it revealed that 34 counties had not reported at least one child fatality to the State Law Enforcement Division.

"That generic statement tarred all counties with 'the same brush,'" said Richland County Coroner Garry Watts. And it made it seem as if the deaths of 152 children had slipped through the cracks, said Anderson County Deputy Coroner Donald McCown.

Unreported cases

Dorchester County Coroner Christopher Nibbet said part of the problem with the unreported cases was SLED's fax machine.

Please see **CORONER**, Page A6

Find injured wildlife? Here's how you can help



A bald eagle is treated for lead poisoning.

PROVIDED BY CENTER FOR BIRDS OF PREY

Injured, sick bald eagle gets a second chance, thanks to motorist

BY BO PETERSEN
bpeters@postandcourier.com

The bald eagle staggered in the middle of the traffic lanes on U.S. Highway 17. It had been hit once and was about to be hit again. A motorist pulled to the side of the road, herded the taloned bird to the median, where he stayed with it until raptor rescuers arrived.

His quick thinking and heads-up phone calls is making the difference for the eagle, which had lead poisoning from eating a shotgun pellet, likely in roadkill. Taken to the Birds of Prey Center in Awendaw,

the raptor had surgery this week and is being treated for poisoning and its injuries.

It might just fly again, said Jim Elliott, center director. But it was a close call. "It doesn't take a lot of lead to become toxic for a bird."

Injured and sometimes wounded animals on the roadway and in the woods are a year-round problem that is exacerbated in the fall when yearlings and migrating species move and hunting seasons crank up.

"We do see more birds this time of year," Elliott said.

So what do you do if you come across one? That can't be answered

Where to get help for injured wildlife

The S.C. Department of Natural Resources maintains a contact list for wildlife rehabilitators at <http://dnr.sc.gov/wildlife> and an emergency hot line for shot or sick wildlife, 800-922-5431.

The Center for Birds of Prey phone automatically transfers to an emergency number after hours, 843-971-7474.

simply, and the answers vary almost species to species. A nuisance raccoon presents different issues than an endangered-species raptor.

Most hunters will track down and retrieve animals they shoot, but a few animals do stagger away, said Sam Chappelow, S.C. Department

of Natural Resources wildlife regional coordinator. Poaching does happen, and is prosecuted.

The complexity is one of the factors that keep animal control officers from handling wildlife at all.

Please see **EAGLE**, Page A1

Berkeley responds to ruffled feathers

Chickens likely to be limited to larger lots

BY BRENDA RINDGE
brindge@postandcourier.com

Berkeley County Council is expected Monday to take another peek at a plan to allow residents to keep chickens in their backyards in residential areas.

After a lot of complaints over a proposal last month, Council's Land Use and Development Committee tweaked the suggested change to the zoning ordinance, more than doubling the lot size required for residents who want to raise poultry.

Please see **CHICKEN**, Page A4

Ebola crisis a wake-up call for health care officials

BY LAURAN NEURGAARD
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The next Ebola or the next SARS. Maybe even the next HIV. Even before the Ebola epidemic in West Africa is brought under control, public health officials are girding for the next health disaster. "It's really urgent that we address the weak links and blind spots around the world," Dr. Tom Frieden, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told The Associated Press. "Ebola is a powerful reminder that a health threat anywhere can affect us."

Please see **HEALTH**, Page A1

Inside



BUSINESS

S'ville forklift-maker rebrands itself for broader reach, D3

SPORTS

USC women stake claim to No. 1 with win over San Diego State, C1

Does Hillary Clinton have 'new car smell' Obama says voters crave?

BY DARLENE SUPERVILLE
Associated Press

HENDERSON, NEV. — President Barack Obama says voters want a "new car smell" in the 2016 White House race and that Hillary Rodham Clinton would be "a great president." But would Clinton pass that particular smell test?

In a nationally televised interview broadcast Sunday, Obama seemed to suggest that any Democrat other than him would provide the turn of the page that he says voters are interested in.

He acknowledged the "dings" to his own political standing during nearly six years of sometimes bruising battles with Congress and said

Americans will want something new. "They want to drive something off the lot that doesn't have as much mileage as me," Obama said on ABC's "This Week," which was taped Friday in Las Vegas following a public appearance there by the president.

Please see **OBAMA**, Page A1



Obama



Clinton



Chance of storms.
High 79, Low 52.
Complete 5-day
forecast, B8

Bridge — B7 Editorial — A10 Sudoku — B7
Classifieds — C7 Movies — B5 Television — B4
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USA TODAY

ANALYSTS SEE DOW SURGING THROUGH 18,000 CEILING PAGE 5B

FINAL EDITION

COURTHOUSE MOVES UP ON PRIORITY LIST



MYKAL MCLEOD/NEWS STAFF

This historic federal courthouse in downtown Greenville could be replaced by a 10-story structure across from the county courthouse on East North Street.

Long-delayed \$92 million downtown project moves up in federal rankings, but funding still isn't in place

By Eric Connor

Staff writer
ec Connor@greenvillenews.com

The future site of the long-planned Greenville federal courthouse is nothing more than a parking lot now, rarely full, sitting on nearly \$4 million worth of prime downtown real estate with promises long unfulfilled.

The city of Greenville has yearned to see the 10-story courthouse built across from the county courthouse on East North Street, so a definitive course can be set for development in the district and another jewel painted into downtown's skyline.

For the first time in years, movement has been made on the two-acre piece of property, which the federal government began buying in 2011, a block away from the historic federal courthouse it will replace.

The \$92 million project has been plagued for two decades by lack of funding and ques-

tions over whether it and other courthouse projects across the nation are necessary.

However, this past September, Greenville's federal courthouse moved up on the federal judiciary's priority list — one spot up to No. 5, out of 11 projects — and was ranked as one of the most urgent needs among courthouses in the nation.

The move — while only one spot and absent promises from Congress that the project will be funded anytime soon — is significant.

It comes as other projects fell down the list following a change in how the government determines which projects are actually needed, a shift itself that comes after an investigative arm of Congress found that the previous methods of ranking were poorly calculated and led to wasteful spending.

Even the smallest movement can mean a difference of years for a courthouse project.

See COURTHOUSE, Page 4A

HELP FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Shopping season also busy time for cyber criminals

Temptations online put bad guys in 'scam overdrive'

By Tim Smith

Staff Writer
t.smith@greenvilleonline.com

COLUMBIA — Black Friday and Cyber Monday are not just peak shopping days for consumers but also big opportunities for online criminals who are using a variety of scams to steal identities and shoppers' money, experts say.

National business forecasters predict online sales for this holiday season will top more than \$100 billion and holidays shopping overall will gross more than \$600 billion.

That represents too tempting a target for criminal gangs and those who prey on consumers' computers, their cards and bank accounts.

"They are turning on the volume," Stu Sjouwerman, CEO and founder of KnowBe4, a web-based security awareness training firm, told *The Greenville News*. "It's the holiday season for the bad guys too. But not the way you might think. They go into scam overdrive mode."

And there are plenty of scams.

In the past week, the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center posted alerts on two scams.

In one, an online donation scam, a criminal makes a donation to a charity or other organization, often using a stolen credit card. Then the criminal contacts the charity to report an extra zero was added in his credit card donation, requesting a refund of the difference onto a different card.

In a more popular online scam, according to the agency, criminals post fraudulent ads to sell automobiles, recreation vehicles, boats and other outdoor equipment at a huge discount, usually explaining they are moving, the sale is part of a divorce or they are being deployed overseas.

Once contacted, the criminals offer to complete the transaction through eBay. But the phone numbers used are not to eBay, and no items are sent even after

See CYBER, Page 4A



Help for the holidays!

This week's stories save readers time, money

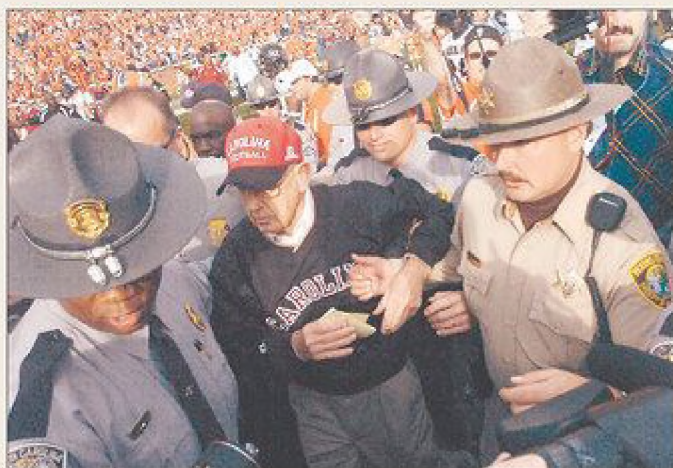
The Greenville News helps you navigate the holiday shopping season with special stories all week long.

NCAA SOCCER TOURNAMENT: USC Women shock UNC 1-0, move to Elite Eight. B1

The State

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2014 | THESTATE.COM

TEN YEARS AGO: THE WEEK THAT CHANGED USC FOOTBALL



Under heavy security, University of South Carolina head coach Lou Holtz leaves the field after losing 29-7 to Clemson in Death Valley in November 2004.

'WHAT A WAY TO END A CAREER'

While Holtz brought 'Next Year' to USC, fight tarnished his legacy

By DAVID CLONINGER
dcloninger@thestate.com

SECOND IN A SERIES

Miss Part 1 of the series? Read it at GoGamecocks.com.

Nov. 22, 2004

That Monday was an awful day.

South Carolina's players rested in their rooms or apartments, knowing the program they had fought so hard to build was back on shaky ground. Not only had they failed to win their rivalry game, but they had failed to give their outgoing coach one last gift, and then compounded it by taking part in a despicable brawl with their orange-clad Upstate neighbors.

Beaten, bruised, black-eyed and bewildered at what the future held, the Gamecocks pondered what they were going to do. Coach Lou Holtz had confronted the rumors that had been flying since the Tennessee

game, telling the team that he was going to retire at season's end. They didn't know if the other rumors — about another legendary coach agreeing to take the job — were true and there was no relief from the constant questions.

Get something to eat around town, fans and students would ask what happened at Clemson and what was going to happen. Sit at home and wonder the same. Try to watch TV and ESPN's SportsCenter was replaying the Detroit-Indiana NBA and the USC-Clemson fights on a continuous loop.

Until the networks broke in and final-stamped what every-

one already knew. In a packed room at Williams-Brice Stadium, Holtz said goodbye.

...

"We just wanted to try to have him go out on top," offensive lineman Jonathan Alston said. "As you know, it didn't happen that way."

Wearing a black suit and gray tie, Holtz retired, saying that he had done what he had hoped to do at USC and positive that he was leaving the program in a much better place than when he took over.

Holtz never replicated the magical 2000 and 2001 seasons,

SEE **HOLTZ** PAGE A7

Counseling program treats 'whole child'

Richland 2 intervention efforts are gaining wider attention

By CAROLYN CLICK
cclick@thestate.com

In three nondescript portables tucked away on a Richland 2 high school campus, family therapist Karen Cooper-Haber and her small counseling staff spend weekday afternoons and evenings untangling the lives of troubled students.

Many of the students, suspended and possibly facing expulsion, arrive at the district's Family Intervention Services sullen and angry. "loaded for bear," as Cooper-Haber puts it.

They are reluctant to unpack their past to help counselors understand why they disrupt class, engage in fights or participate in other unacceptable behaviors. And they surely don't want their mothers, fathers, grandmothers or friends listening in, too.

But that's just what Cooper-Haber tries to do in

SEE **INTERVIEW** PAGE A6

HOLIDAY SHOPPING

Who's open, when and where?

By KRISTY EPPLEY RUPON
krupon@thestate.com

Black Friday shoppers are split between two camps these days: Those who gobble up Thanksgiving dinner to hit the stores early or those who skip the shopping until early Friday morning to savor turkey day.

Stores are following suit, choosing to open earlier every year or refusing to open on Thanksgiving Day so their employees can have the day off to spend with friends and family.

Either way you play it, from Grey Thursday and Black Friday to Cyber Monday, deals abound. A few things to know this year:

Just say no: While many stores will open Thanksgiving Day — such as Kimari, which opens at 6 a.m. Thursday and will stay open for nearly two straight days, and JCPenney, which will open at 5 p.m. Thursday — some retailers are backing

SEE **SHOP** PAGE A7



YOUR WEEK

Two more staples of the Midlands holiday season — Main Street Ice and Holiday Lights on the River — open this week. There's plenty else to do during Thanksgiving Week besides eating a holiday dinner

Terriers race to victory

OktoberFetch competition held in Aiken | 3A

Aiken Standard

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MONDAY, November 24, 2014

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STAFF PHOTO BY DEDE BILES

Pit Bull Motorcycle Club members Chris Harris, left, and Paul Holland serve food while Mildred Cheatham, right, goes through the line during an early Thanksgiving meal at Hahn Village on Sunday. The meal was a community service project for the club.

Pit Bulls serve up food, smiles at holiday dinner

BY DEDE BILES
dbiles@aikenstandard.com

Mildred Cheatham flashed a big smile as she watched her plate being piled high with turkey, ham, dressing, green beans and other tasty food Sunday. Aiken's Pit Bull Motorcycle Club was serving an early Thanksgiving dinner at Hahn Village, which is operated by the City of Aiken Housing Authority, and Cheatham was one of the first people in a long line.

"It's very nice what these Pit Bull gentlemen are doing for us," Cheatham said. "It lets me know they are helping the community and not only looking after themselves. God has blessed them so they are passing that blessing on and letting the community know it's all about love."

Shirley Hall also showed up for the meal.

"I look at this as a blessing because a lot of people are hungry and they feed a lot of people," she said. "I enjoy the conversation here and the food, which is very good."

The Pit Bull Motorcycle Club has

a dozen members. They purchased and cooked some of the food for the pre-Thanksgiving dinner, and some of the dishes were donated.

INSIDE
Thanksgiving Day safety, 2A

ONLINE
See more photos from this event at www.aikenstandard.com

Michael "DC" Walker, but the club welcomed people of all ages to the feast.

Diners were allowed to get more than one serving of their favorite dishes, and some left with plates of food covered in aluminum foil to eat later.

"We want to put smiles on people's faces; everybody needs a smile," said Walker, who owns Walker Janitorial Service.

Please see **MEALS**, Page 12A



STAFF PHOTO BY DEDE BILES

Mauri Dunbar enjoys his meal during an early Thanksgiving dinner at Hahn Village on Sunday. The meal was a community service project for Aiken's Pit Bull Motorcycle Club.

DOE officials dispute fuel claims

BY DERREK ASBERRY
dasberry@aikenstandard.com

A Savannah River Site watchdog group obtained early documents on German fuel potentially landing at the Site and made claims that a decision has already been made to ship the fuel to the Site. The Department of Energy responded that no decision has been made, stating the documents only point to early discussions between the two countries.

SRS Watch Director Tom Clements recently received several documents this week via a Freedom of Information Act request. Several of the documents date to 2012 and include preliminary discussions on the issue.

They include a letter from DOE to a German legislative body stating DOE would work with Germany's Federal Ministry of Education and Research to conduct a feasibility study on the acceptance and disposition of spent fuel; a memorandum of understanding outlining the potential scope of work between Savannah River National Laboratory and another German group; and a Work for Others agreement from Germany asking Savannah River Nuclear Solutions to assist with evaluating the potential disposition of the graphite fuel pebble material.

The issue falls under the Atoms for Peace Program initiated by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to make highly enriched uranium, or HEU, available to all countries who wanted it for research. Part of the agreement is for the U.S. to take the material back once research was completed.

Though SRS is the only site in the DOE complex being considered for the material, a spokesperson told the Aiken Standard that a decision has not been made.

Please see **FUEL**, Page 12A

AREA DEATHS

Andrew (Drew) Crutchfield Sprinkle, Brevard, N.C.

Sara Carole Owens Thames, Aiken
Nathan Andrew Schmitz, Augusta
Deaths and Funerals, 6A

WEATHER

Open enrollment causes questions

BY TEDDY KULMALA
tkulmala@aikenstandard.com

Open enrollment for health care coverage under the Affordable Care Act began earlier this month, and Rural Health Services is available for

The second open enrollment period for marketplace policies began Nov. 15 and ends Feb. 15. This is a window that allows people to renew or change their insurance plans or purchase a policy. Under the new law, consumers cannot buy health insurance

marital status.

"We have some new plans, and there's been some additions to the plans that were already in place," said Anne Fulcher, outreach coordinator for Rural Health Services and a certified application counselor

Fulcher said anyone who has had a change in financial or household situation, including changes in marital status, should consider renewing coverage. Anyone looking to get a better rate on a plan might want to consider re-enrolling.



ALL-LAKELANDS: Who's the best of the best? Find out in **Sports, 1B**

INDEX-JOURNAL

www.indexjournal.com

2 SECTIONS, 18 PAGES

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2014

DAILY 75¢, SUNDAY \$1.50

SC prosecutors: Lack of funding puts public at risk

Associated Press

CHARLESTON — South Carolina prosecutors are warning their offices don't have enough money to keep up with thousands of criminal cases waiting for trial, leaving victims to wait for

justice and increasing the risk suspects will commit additional crimes while free on bail.

South Carolina's 305 prosecutors handle four times the national average of criminal cases, the South Carolina Commission on Prosecution Coordination said.

Prosecutors also are responsible for pursuing more than double the 150 felony cases recommended by American Bar Association standards.

The heavy work load means cases take longer to get to trial, increasing

the odds that witnesses will disappear or forget crucial testimony, Beaufort County area Solicitor Duffie Stone told The Post and Courier of Charleston.

"Nothing good comes from delays for this state," that ranks sixth in the nation for violent crime, Stone said.

The state now spends \$13.7 million on prosecutions, about 23 percent of funding for South Carolina's 16 solicitor's offices. Counties and municipalities must fund about 60 percent

See **FUNDING**, page 4A

WEAR & TEAR



MADDY JONES | INDEX-JOURNAL

Ware Shoals Chief of Police Harry Trick stands beside his patrol car, a 1999 Crown Victoria.

Ware Shoals, Ninety Six deal with aging patrol fleets

By DANIEL PERRY
dperry@indexjournal.com

Ware Shoals Police Chief Harry Trick jokes his 1999 Crown Victoria patrol car is the oldest such vehicle used in a South Carolina police department. "It's an antique," he said. "It's got almost

200,000 miles."

Trick said his seven full-time officers use seven police units to patrol the town of 2,170 residents. Each 12-hour shift of patrolling puts at least 75 miles on a vehicle.

Across Greenwood County in Ninety Six, Police Chief Chris Porter said his five full-time officers can accumulate up to 100 miles driving on every street doing patrol in the 1,998-resident town.

"You are looking at 10 years old for a police car and its harder mileage on a car. Mainly our average patrol speed is 30 miles per hour," said Porter.

Ware Shoals and Ninety Six are just some of the law enforcement departments in the Lakelands balancing rising mileage and age on patrol cars with the need to cost-effectively replace them. Besides patrolling in their towns, Ware Shoals and Ninety Six's police

departments have to transport arrested suspects to the Greenwood County Detention Center. Because of Ware Shoals' geography, police officers also have to drive to Abbeville or Laurens to drop off suspects depending on what part of town they are arrested in.

The police departments also have policies for officers to take their patrol vehicles

See **AGING**, page 4A



Funeral service a calling for Martin

By GUY CLAUDE DOMANICH

but work at the funeral home did help

SPRIT OF GIVING

Church members use mini windfall to help others A4



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5 Things to read today



IS recruits children

The Islamic State is conscripting children for battle and committing abuses against the most vulnerable at a young age, according to a growing body of evidence assembled from residents, activists, experts and human rights groups. **PAGE A6**

Can't Beat that

It's been called the letter that launched a literary genre — 16,000 amphetamine-fueled, stream-of-consciousness words written by Neal Cassady to his friend Jack Kerouac in 1950. And it's going up for sale. **PAGE A4**

Ferguson on edge

Despite preparations for a weekend decision in the Ferguson shooting case, the grand jurors apparently need more time to deliberate, and the uncertainty just seemed to feed the anxiety and speculation Sunday. **PAGE A3**

Sex assault policy

A new proposal in New Jersey makes it the latest state moving to require college campuses to define when "yes means yes" in an effort to stem the tide of sexual assaults. **PAGE A4**

Looking at Colorado

Republicans in search of a way to oppose President Barack Obama's moves on immigration without alienating the nation's fast-growing population of Hispanic voters can find a playbook in Colorado. **PAGE A9**

On the Web

2 charged in fatal club shooting

Motive for slaying remains unknown

By JENNY ARNOLD
jennifer.arnold@shj.com

One man was killed and two are charged with murder after a shooting at Universal Events in Spartanburg early Sunday.

Shedrick Andre Savage, 32, of 213 Clairemont St., Gaffney, and Rashawn Alexander Miller, 24, of 506 S. Oliver St., Apt. C-214, Gaffney, have been charged with murder by the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office, Lt. Kevin Bobo said.

According to the Spartanburg County Coroner's Office, Charlie Jackson Jr., 23, of Spartanburg



Savage



Miller

died at Spartanburg Medical Center after a shooting at Universal Events, a nightclub on Southport Road.

Jackson was pronounced dead at 3:26 a.m., Coroner Rusty Clevenger said. An autopsy Sunday showed that Jackson died of a single gunshot wound to the chest.

Deputies responded to the

◆ SEE FATAL PAGE A9



TIM KIMZEY/TIM KIMZEY@SHJ.COM

Two Gaffney men have been arrested in a fatal shooting early Sunday morning at the Universal Events nightclub. The victim was a Spartanburg man.

ON A WING AND A PRAYER



PHOTOS BY JOHN BYRUM/JOHN BYRUM@SHJ.COM

Nannie Jeffries, front, has started two transitional houses for women trying to get back on their feet after legal or drug problems. Women who live in one of the homes must follow the rules, work and meet with a mentor.

Angels Charge helps women rise above their past troubles

By FELICIA KITZMILLER
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It might be a little early, but an artificial pine tree adorned with lights, red bows and novelty ornaments twinkles in the bright sunshine at a small brick home on Cedar Springs Road.



US starts planning for next epidemic

By LAURAN NEERGAARD
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The next Ebola or the next SARS. Maybe even the next HIV. Even before the Ebola epidemic in West Africa is brought under control, public health officials are girding for the next health disaster.

"It's really urgent that we address the weak links and blind spots around the world," Dr. Tom Frieden, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told The Associated Press. "Ebola is a powerful reminder that a health threat anywhere can affect us."

Ebola sprang from one of those blind spots, in an area that lacks the health systems needed to detect an outbreak before it becomes a crisis. Now, the Obama administration has requested \$600 million for the CDC to implement what it calls the Global Health Security Agenda, working with an international coalition to shore up disease detection in high-risk countries and guard against the next contagion.

There's little doubt there will be a next time. Just in recent years, the world has seen bird flu sicken people in Southeast Asia, the respiratory killer SARS spread from China, the 2009 flu pandemic, growing threats



SPORTS Clemson looks to break five-game losing streak to South Carolina. **Page 1B**

Morning News

MONDAY NOVEMBER 24, 2014

The Voice of the Pee Dee

TODAY'S WEATHER

Warmer, a passing morning shower.
High 79, low 53.
DETAILS 2A

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75 cents

A voice for the children

Guardian ad Litem volunteer helps the helpless

BY MELISSA ROLLINS
Morning News
mrollins@florencenews.com

SECOND IN A SERIES



FLORENCE — Getting laid off from a job is not something that many people can say led them to make a positive difference in someone else's life. For Olenka Morelli, that's exactly what happened.

In 2011, Morelli's husband died from throat cancer. When she was informed that she would be losing her job just a short while later, Morelli said that she didn't know what to do with herself anymore.

"I was married for 34 years," Morelli said. "I had worked with Roche for 30 years of my life, first in New Jersey and then in South Carolina. I had made enough money where I didn't really have to go back to work, but I wasn't ready to retire completely. I was excited not to have to do anything, but after a month or two, I started waking up feeling like I had no purpose."

» **TODAY:** Olenka Morelli, a volunteer with the Guardian ad Litem program.

» **GET INVOLVED:** Find more information about the Guardian ad Litem program in South Carolina and how to become a volunteer by visiting scgal.org. No legal experience or degree is required, though volunteers must be older than 21.

» **COMING TUESDAY:** Gretchen Parrott, a volunteer with the Florence Area Humane Society.

Now she is a volunteer in the Guardian ad Litem program, which provides advocates for children. She also is a regular volunteer with the Friends of the Florence Little Theatre and the Florence



Olenka Morelli is a volunteer with the South Carolina Guardian ad Litem program. She said that being a voice for children who can't speak for themselves is rewarding.

County Museum, where she is working as a docent.

All of this started one day when she visited her doctor. He was the same doctor who had helped care for her husband while he was in a hospice. The doctor was going on a mission trip to Belize with his church to provide medical care

See **VOLUNTEER**, Page 3A

Education Funding

Statewide property tax could fix inequities

BY CASSIE COPE
The State

COLUMBIA — A House proposal that failed last year could form the foundation of a solution to South Carolina's K-12 education-funding crisis.

The proposal would establish a statewide property tax rate to pay for schools. The taxes collected from businesses and industries would be distributed among the state's 82 school districts, based on their student population.

Taxes from mega-industrial deals — including Boeing in Charleston County, BMW in Spartanburg County, nuclear reactors in Fairfield County and tire makers in Sumter and Aiken counties — would be spread among all schools across the state's 46 counties, helping eliminate the disparity in the amount of money that industry-poor rural counties now have to spend on schools.

For 25 years, the plan would ensure that wealthier school districts do not see their budgets cut. But after that, taxpayers in districts could find themselves subsidizing schools in poorer areas of the state.

The plan has caught the eye of incoming State Schools Superintendent Molly Spearman of rural Saluda County.

"I've seen firsthand the disparity, but I've also seen firsthand the lack of opportunity of raising revenue locally," Spearman said.

State Rep. Jenny Horne, R-Dorchester, introduced the bill — called the S.C. Jobs, Education and Tax Act — during the last legislative session. The bill died in committee. But Horne plans to pre-file the bill again this year.

The proposal also would:

» Streamline the many funding lines in the state budget that pay for K-12 education.

» Allow school districts more control over how that money is spent.

» Give school districts the ability to raise more money for schools, in addition to what the state spends, by levying local taxes that, if approved by voters, also would apply to homes.

Spearman said she supports the spread-the-wealth idea behind the plan, which potentially could answer a recent Supreme Court ruling saying the state has failed to provide a "minimally adequate" education to S.C. students in the poorest districts.

"I support a plan that will be more streamlined, more equitable for all," said Spearman, who takes office in January.

'Those textile mills have left'

A decade ago, Spearman testified in that court case — Abbeville County School District v. State of South Carolina — about her own experience with school inequality.

Spearman, a former teacher and administrator, had transferred back to her home school district in Saluda County after working in the Lexington-Richland 5 district.

The equipment, materials and facilities in rural Saluda were far different from

A heart for kids



McLeod SafeKids Pee Dee/Coastal Director Ashley Costas (right) talks with Erica Gilmore about the effects of shaken-baby syndrome at the SafeKids booth during the ninth-annual Kids Jamboree in January at the Florence Civic Center.

Costas helps kids be their best in work and play

BY MELISSA ROLLINS
Morning News
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FLORENCE — The adage is, "It takes a special person to be a teacher," and while Ashley Costas might not be in a classroom, she definitely has been teaching kids in the Pee Dee for the past few years.

Costas is the coordinator for McLeod Safe Kids Pee Dee/Coastal and just celebrated her third anniversary.

that I don't always know the answer, and sometimes I have to say, 'I don't know, but I can get you that answer and get back to you.'"

It was not Costas' intention to work for McLeod. She had gone to school for massage therapy and had been working as a massage therapist. When the opportunity came, however, she knew it was the right step.

"It's one of those things that's a God thing," Costas said. "I don't want to say it



Ashley Costas, Safe Kids Pee Dee/Coastal coordinator for McLeod Health, demonstrates the proper way to check a forward-facing car seat. Safe Kids provides free car-seat safety checks every third Thursday at Kohl's in Florence.

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Graham calls GOP Benghazi report 'garbage'

SC senator says review allows more finger-pointing about responsibility for 2012 attack

By CHRISTI PARSONS

Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — A top Republican took aim at his GOP colleagues on Sunday for issuing a report that largely absolved the Obama administration for its handling of the 2012 attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya, dismissing the accounting by the GOP-led House Intelligence Committee as "full of crap."

Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina said that in compiling its report the committee accepted a "complete bunch of garbage" and allowed more finger-pointing within the administration about responsibility for the fatalities at the consulate.

"I'm saying the House Intelligence Committee is doing a lousy job policing their own," Graham said on CNN's "State of the Union."

"This report puts all the blame on the State Department and absolves the intelligence community," he said. "When the Department of Defense committees looked at it, the Department of Defense was held blameless. At the end of the day, everybody is pointing fingers to everybody else."

Please see GRAHAM on 9A



U.S. SEN. LINDSEY GRAHAM

"This report puts all the blame on the State Department and absolves the intelligence community. When the Department of Defense committees looked at it, the Department of Defense was held blameless. At the end of the day, everybody is pointing fingers to everybody else."

'ROCK STAR' MARATHONER

2-time cancer survivor walks NYC race



Gena Wilson, center, crosses the finish line at the New York City Marathon on Nov. 2. Wilson grew up in Beaufort and moved to Scotland, where she had her first battle with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in 2011.

By ERIN MOODY • emoody@beaufortgazette.com • 843-706-8184

Gena Wilson spent the morning of Nov. 2 rushing toward the opportunity for which she had so long prepared. Thousands of people surrounded her, all eager to get to the same place, to seize their opportunities, too. And when they arrived, everyone dashed away again, as fast as they could.



F-35B noise study finished

Report says the F-35B's noise level is comparable to or lower than the F/A-18s currently flying at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort.

By MATT McNAB

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The new F-35B fighters flying over Beaufort might not sound like their older counterparts, but they are no louder, according to data released last month by the F-35's Joint Program Office.

An executive summary made public Oct. 31, ahead of the release of the full report, says the F-35B's noise level is comparable to or lower than the F/A-18s currently flying at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort. The summary, released by the military's office for the Joint Strike Fighter, indicated that the F-35B is slightly louder on takeoff, but significantly quieter on all approaches.

However, it was unclear if the results reflect noise levels for the F-35B's short takeoff and vertical landing capabilities. The testing was completed at Edwards Air Force Base in California in September 2013, according to the summary.

F-35B training was expected to start at MCAS Beaufort this month.

Please see F-35B on 9A



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