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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

URGE COUNCIL TO PASS REFUGEE RESOLUTION

At each of the last several York County Council meetings a number of citizens explained why the Council should adopt a resolution exempting our county from placements from the UN Refugee Resettlement Program. Unfortunately, the councilmen/women didn't listen.

Several councilmen/women failed to research the agenda item or listen to the constituents, and only Councilman Bruce Henderson indicated knowledge of the issue.

Councilwoman Christi Cox responded, "We are a nation of immigrants..." changing the subject from the problems with the UN Refugee Resettlement Program to a wistful reminiscence of our great-grandparents passing through Ellis Island. Our nation needs capable and industrious people who want to become assimilated Americans, but that is a legal immigration policy issue unrelated to the UN Refugee Resettlement Program.

Another councilman said there is "nothing we can do about this at the

county level." Wrong. South Carolina law specifies that counties can refuse state placement of refugees. Only those who do not oppose participation will receive placements.

Councilman Britt Blackwell ordered staff to "write something up saying we will support whatever the governor wants to do." But the constituents are asking the Council to do the exact opposite. Deferring the county's authority to Governor Haley, who has supported the UN Refugee Resettlement program, would indicate that we want to participate - in direct conflict with constituents' wishes and best interests.

There is NO COST to this resolution. Other counties have passed resolutions, and more are pending. There can be no harm to county residents resulting from it. York County constituents almost unanimously want the council to pass it. The cost and risk of resettling unemployable third-world refugees is more than we can bear. Please urge the County Council to pass a meaningful resolution at the Dec. 21 meeting.

- Tom Balek, Lake Wylie



148 Winthrop poll: Trump remains top dog in S.C.

BY HAL MILLARD
halmillard@gmail.com

South Carolina voters are in no hurry to fire Donald Trump.

Despite Trump's penchant for angering many in the Republican mainstream, the GOP presidential candidate continues to reign supreme in South Carolina, just three months before Palmetto State voters go to the polls for the February presidential primary.

In the latest Winthrop Poll, released last week, 24% of likely Republican voters in South Carolina polled said they backed Trump.

The poll came out after Trump's highly publicized call to ban all Muslims from entering the United States — a controversial proposal that sparked outrage among many mainstream Republicans, including SCGOP chairman Matt Moore and Gov. Nikki Haley, both of Lexington.

However, Trump received boisterous support for his plan from his S.C. supporters when he reiterated it last week at a major campaign speech in Mt. Pleasant aboard the USS Yorktown. In fact, a Fox News poll released after Trump made his anti-Muslim remarks saw his S.C. poll numbers jump 8 percentage points, with the candidate garnering support from 35% of likely S.C. GOP voters.

In Winthrop's poll, Trump's nearest competitors in South Carolina were Sen. Ted Cruz (16%), Ben Carson (14%), Sen. Marco Rubio (11%), and Jeb Bush (9%), according to the poll.

S.C. Sen. Lindsey Graham, one of Trump's harshest critics, polled 2%. All other candidates polled at 2% or lower.

"Trump leads across multiple categories of voters from a high of 35% among those who wish to create a database of Muslims in the U.S. to a low of 22% among Evangelical Christians, who will make up nearly 60% of the S.C. GOP Presidential Primary electorate," Winthrop Poll director Scott Huffmon said.

"Ted Cruz is tied with Ben Carson at 17% among Evangelicals. This is a significant drop for Carson among Evangelicals," Huffmon added. "He registered 33% support among this group in a Monmouth Poll a month ago. It is worth noting that 1 in 5 Evangelicals remain undecided.

"With 25%, Ted Cruz is within the margin of error of Trump's 27% among those who approve of the Tea Party," Huffmon continued. "Trump's support is high among those who express anger — as opposed to frustration or contentment — with the government. He rakes in nearly a third of the angry vot-

ers, 9 percentage points higher than Ted Cruz, his nearest rival in this category."

Poll respondents had a different take on the 14 GOP candidates when asked if they have generally favorable or unfavorable views of them. The front-runner Trump received a favorable rating from only half of respondents, while 37% said unfavorable and 13% undecided. The candidate with the best favorables was Carson at 75%.

Regardless, Trump has led 13 of the 14 major polls taken in the state since late July, according to Real Clear Politics, which tracks political polls nationwide.

Interestingly, a Winthrop Poll in April, before Trump and most other candidates officially entered the race, found that among likely S.C. GOP voters, 74% of them said they would not consider voting for Trump — and only 2% said they would vote for the brash New York tycoon if the election were held at the time of the poll.

In that April poll, former Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, and Bush were the favorites of the state's GOP voters. Walker has since dropped out of the race and Bush, once considered the presumptive nominee, has failed to resonate much with voters here or nationally.

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State selling buildings

Three state-owned buildings in downtown Columbia, including the 14-story Rutledge Building, are up for sale because they are functionally obsolete, underutilized, or in need of significant capital investment. The sale of three of those buildings: the Rutledge Building, home for the Department of Education, and office buildings at 2221 Devine and 1800 Gervais streets is expected to generate \$5.6 million, Gov. Nikki Haley said.



148 Governor: Feds owe S.C. \$1M daily in 2016

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COLUMBIA (AP) — Gov. Nikki Haley has warned the Department of Energy she expects South Carolina to collect a \$1 million daily fine for the agency's failure to meet a Jan. 1 nuclear fuel deadline.

In a letter obtained by The Associated Press, Haley told Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz that South Carolina "will almost certainly be forced" to sue if his agency doesn't start making payments on New Year's Day.

"South Carolina cannot stand idly by while DOE violates federal law and fails to fulfill its commitment to the state," Haley wrote in the letter dated Monday.

The Savannah River Site's mixed-oxide project — known as MOX — is intended to turn weapons-grade plutonium into commercial nuclear reactor fuel.

But it's years behind schedule.

Since MOX isn't operating, by law the federal government is supposed to remove 1 metric ton of plutonium from South Carolina by Jan. 1. If not, the agency's supposed to pay \$1 million a day for "economic and impact assistance," up to \$100 million yearly, until either the facility meets production goals or the plutonium is taken out of state for storage or disposal elsewhere.

However, a clause in the law makes the fine "subject to the availability of appropriations."

Asked about the letter, a spokeswoman for DOE's National Nuclear Security Administration, which manages the project, said the agency "is working to meet its commitment to the state of South

Carolina." Spokeswoman Francie Israeli did not comment further.

U.S. Sens. Lindsey Graham and Tim Scott and U.S. Rep. Joe Wilson have previously encouraged Haley to sue to keep the project going.

"South Carolina should pursue all options at its disposal," Graham spokesman Kevin Bishop said Tuesday.

MOX is intended to help the United States fulfill an agreement with Russia to dispose of at least 34 metric tons apiece of weapons-grade plutonium. According to NNSA, that's enough material for about 17,000 nuclear warheads.

Construction began in 2007. The General Accountability Office has said the project is more than three years behind its 2016 completion deadline — and, at \$8 billion, at least \$3 billion over budget.

"South Carolina is certainly grateful to play an important

role in the United States' nuclear nonproliferation efforts and for the benefits the MOX facility brings to our state, but this does not come without risk to South Carolina," Haley wrote.

"The security, economic and environmental interests of South Carolina are at stake with long-term storage of these materials in our state, particularly when there is no apparent or immediate plan for its disposal or removal," she said.

In September, Attorney General Alan Wilson warned the Department of Energy that he's prepared to sue — again — if MOX isn't made a priority.

South Carolina sued the Obama administration last





year after officials said they wanted to shutter the project, citing cost overruns and delays. In its lawsuit, the state said the federal government had made a commitment to South Carolina and shouldn't mothball the effort, noting it legally couldn't use money intended to build the plant to shut it down.

The state dropped the suit

several months later, when the administration committed to funding the project through that fiscal year.

But in the months since, the administration has said it's searching for a cheaper way to dispose of the plutonium, like immobilizing it in glass or processing it in different kinds of reactors.

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Sen. Matthews: 'I will never forget Jasper'

Education, funding for low-income areas are her top priorities

BY JESSICAH LAWRENCE
 Jasper County Sun Times
 jessicah.lawrence@morris.com



Special to the Jasper County Sun Times

Jasper County Councilman Theo Drayton, Sen. Margie Bright Matthews, County Councilman Marty Sauls, Hardeeville Mayor Bronco Bostick, County Council chairwoman Barbara Clark and Ridgeland Mayor Joey Malphrus huddle together during a meet and greet held Dec. 7 for Sen. Matthews.

Walterboro attorney Margie Bright Matthews, who won the District 45 seat to succeed slain Sen. Clementa Pinckney, told Jasper County Council that his death will not be in vain.

Sen. Matthews visited with residents and elected officials during a meet and greet held at the county's chambers on Dec. 7, thanking them for their support.

"Several people have said, 'Don't forget Jasper County.' I was always taught you don't forget the guy who took you to the dance, no matter how he looks. I will never forget Jasper County, you brought me to the dance and that's why I am here," Matthews said.

When addressing the County Council she committed to finding funds for the low-income areas of the Low-country in which she serves.

"Our future is bright. Sen. Pinckney would not have died in vain. We're going to do something about what Jasper County needs," she said.

Pinckney, a Jasper County Democrat and pastor, was gunned down with eight others in June allegedly by a 21-year-old white supremacist inside the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston.

The senator said she was set to meet with Gov. Nikki Haley this week to discuss areas where funding is needed in her district.

"I see how other communities are getting these monies. And it's not Jasper. We're going to start with the parks and make them safe for our children to go to. The governor is giving out the money, we just have to figure out a way to demand it," Matthews said.

Matthews told the coun-

cil members her platform of improving education remains her top priority in order to provide industries with a ready workforce. She has requested she be placed on the education committee and is staying abreast of the Abbeville County School District vs. State case.

(Last year the Supreme Court ordered the Legislature to fix the inequities in Jasper County and other rural schools).

"I asked at the retreat to be on the education committee because it was near and dear to my heart. And because that was the only way we were going to get out of this rut we were in. It's important in getting industries in here," she





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said.

The new senator was sworn in on Oct. 27, becoming the second woman actively serving in the state Senate. She says she also needs the county's help in being educated on the Jasper Ocean Terminal.

"I spoke several times over the years with Sen. Pinckney about the port. I know it was dear to his heart. I need to make sure Jasper County and those involved with this process educate me to the concerns of Jasper County," Matthews said. "Tell me what the issues are. If you don't tell me I won't know. And if you complain later, it's too late."

The senator committed to working for the county, but only with the support of its elected officials and community.

"We have to be in this together," Matthews said. "We have to join hands and do this because the Lowcountry deserves better."

Council chairwoman Barbara Clark told Matthews Jasper County will definitely stay in touch to keep her abreast of what's needed and happening in the county.

Matthews can be reached by calling her law firm at 843-549-6028 or by email at Margiebrightmatthews@scsenate.gov.

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148 Governor Haley denies farmers' request to seek storm aid

Farmers from across South Carolina met at the South Carolina Statehouse on Monday to beg and plead with our Governor to ask Congress for money to offset their estimated \$376 million in losses from the 1,000-year flood that took place in early October.

However, S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley refuses to request funds. She believes that farmers should have federally subsidized crop insurance, and under-insured farmers shouldn't be bailed out.

It appears that she fails to understand that if every farmer had picked the best crop insurance available, it still would not be enough to cover the damage farmers



**Pat
Henegan**

*SC Rep.,
District 54*

face. She also fails to understand that small farms in our Pee Dee area will close, and many jobs will be lost without federal support.

The devastation farmers are facing is unimaginable. However, we all need to understand that this devastation will have an impact on all of us. It filters down from the farmers to their suppliers and to your table (seeds, fertilizer, equipment dealers, truckers, processing plants, jobs-unemployment and

your grocery bill). The governor fails to understand that the safety net that applies to many businesses does not apply to farmers. The crop insurance will not save them.

Therefore, I urge all of you to contact Gov. Haley and tell her that our farmers need help, and they need it now. I have spoken with several farmers in our communities; they are our friends, our neighbors; and they are hard workers. Farmers are not looking for a handout...they are looking for a hand. Agriculture is the number one industry in South Carolina. Our question for Gov. Haley should be, "Why would you not support S.C. farmers,

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when they are the core group of people who feed, clothe and support families across our state on a daily basis?" South Carolina needs

our farmers. Our farmers need South Carolina and Gov. Haley's support NOW! District 54 (Henegan) and District 53 (Yow) will be

writing support letters to our congressmen along with individual letters to our governor asking for support not later but – NOW.

place at the Chamber. Our dec- opened the meeting to Vivian Our club is also excited about of Pilot with us.

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Bill Fleming Receives Order Of Palmetto

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William L. "Bill" Fleming, Sr., was presented The Order of the Palmetto by Ambassador David H. Wilkins on behalf of Governor Nikki Haley at a luncheon of The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina's Winter Conference at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Greenville, S.C.

"I am truly honored and humbled to receive this prestigious award and I thank Governor Haley and her entire staff for this recognition," Fleming said. "I am proud of the opportunities that the cooperatives have provided for the people and the communities in South Carolina, and I look forward to seeing the continued growth and success for many years to come."

The Order of the Palmetto is the state's highest civilian honor awarded to citizens of South Carolina for extraordinary lifetime service and achievements of national or statewide significance. The Order of the Palmetto is a once in a lifetime achievement.

Fleming began working in the electric industry in 1970 with Carolina Power and Light Company. In October of 1971, Bill began working with Pee Dee Electric Cooperative in Darlington, S.C., and served there for 24 years as Vice President of Office and Customer Service and Government Relations.

In January of 1996, Bill became President and CEO of Marlboro Electric Cooperative in Bennettsville, S.C. until his retirement on August 1, 2014. During his tenure at Marlboro



BILL FLEMING (Left) RECEIVES HIS AWARD.
 (Contributed)

Electric, revenues for the cooperative more than tripled, and he played a crucial role in bringing over 1,800 jobs and \$636,185,000 in capital investment to Marlboro and Dillon counties.

Also during his time as President and CEO, Bill was instrumental in the implementation of the Marlboro County Economic Development

Partnership Board, where he served as chairman from 1997-1999 and 2003-2005. He also served as a member of the Dillon County Economic Development Public-Private Partnership, the Carolinas I-95 Mega Site Board, the Palmetto Economic Development Corporation Board, the Cooperative Electric Energy Utility Supply Board, the





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Central Electric Power Cooperative Executive Board, and the Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina Board, where he was the secretary/treasurer in 2013-2014. Bill was instrumental in the development of Marlboro Development Team, a subsidiary of Marlboro Electric which has as its main goal to provide economic growth for South Carolina, especially in the Marlboro and Dillon County areas.

In his community, Bill served as a member of the Darlington County School District Board of Education for 10 years, as chairman for many years, and played a vital role in founding the Mayo Magnet School for Science and Math. He has also been a member of the Board of Directors for First Citizens Bank of Darlington,

Darlington County Chamber of Commerce, Marlboro County Chamber of Commerce, and the Kiwanis Club of Darlington, Rotary Club of Bennettsville, and the Darlington County Airport Commission where he now serves as Chairman. In 2000, Bill was also named the South Carolina Ambassador for Economic Development by Governor Jim Hodges.

Bill has been active in churches in Darlington and Bennettsville as a Sunday school teacher, Assistant Sunday School Superintendent, Deacon and Elder. He is currently a member of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Darlington. Bill and his wife, Jenny, have three children and four grandchildren.



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ONGOING-Governor Nikki Haley's request for a 30-day extension of the registration period for Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) Individual Assistance has been granted.

South Carolinians affected by October's heavy rains and historic flooding now have until Jan. 4, 2016, to apply for disaster assistance with FEMA and the Small Business Administration.

Horry and Georgetown residents who sustained flood losses can apply for assistance by registering online at DisasterAssistance.gov or by calling 800-621-FEMA (3362). Disaster assistance applicants who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability and use a TTY may call 800-462-7585. Those who use 711 or Video Relay Service may call 800-621-FEMA (3362). The toll-free telephone numbers will operate 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week until further notice.

Assistance can include money for temporary rental assistance and essential home repairs for primary homes, low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration to cover uninsured property losses and other programs to help survivors recover from the effects of the disaster.



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Businesses want Haley to oppose drilling off SC shore

COLUMBIA — Businesses opposed to drilling off South Carolina's are making their case to Gov. Nikki Haley.

On Wednesday, business owners and associations are holding a news conference at the Statehouse. Organizers say they will call on Haley to ensure that the state is not included in any federal plans for offshore drilling.

Members of the group will also deliver to Haley a letter signed by hundreds of businesses.

From wire reports