

Title: **Flood survivors still applying for federal assistance**
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Flood survivors still applying for federal assistance

BY AVERY G. WILKS
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More than two months after the historic Oct. 4 flooding, hundreds of residents across South Carolina still are applying daily for federal disaster assistance.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency averaged more than 270 new registrations Monday through Thursday last week, and the U.S. Small Business Administration received nearly 80 applications per day last week.

FEMA, which can grant up to \$33,000 in disaster aid to each affected household, so far has approved roughly \$74 million in disaster aid to individuals and households, spokesman Jim Homstad said. The SBA has approved more than \$104 million in low-interest loans meant to boost the long-term recovery efforts of homeowners, renters and businesses.

Gov. Nikki Haley in late November requested and was granted a 30-day extension to the application period for federal disaster assistance, which previously had a Dec. 4 deadline. Haley said she made the re-

quest because of the volume of applications still pouring in.

"As long as we are seeing those kinds of numbers, we need to make sure that everybody has the ability to continue to get the assistance that they need," Haley said.

Disaster recovery officials are still urging residents to apply ahead of the new deadline, Jan 3 at midnight, and to appeal any denial letters FEMA sends.

"My advice is to apply as soon as you possibly can," Homstad said. "I understand that people have had their lives turned upside down, but there's really no point in waiting. The sooner you do it, the sooner we can assist in your recovery."

More than 95,000 people statewide, including nearly 19,500 in hard-hit Richland County, have registered with FEMA, Homstad said. More than 26 percent of FEMA applicants are receiving aid, while nearly 52 percent of applicants were ineligible, Homstad said.

Homstad said there are a "number of reasons for

ineligibility," including insufficient damage to essential living areas, inability to verify ownership or occupancy, and missing information or essential documents. Applicants with flood insurance are not eligible, and FEMA does not provide grant money for secondary homes, Homstad said.

To apply for FEMA aid, call 800-621-3362, visit disasterassistance.gov or stop by a disaster recovery center. Disaster recovery centers can be found at fema.gov/disaster-recovery-centers.

Flood survivors can apply for an SBA loan by calling 800-659-2955, visiting disasterloan.sba.gov/ela or going to a disaster recovery center.



Title: **New state board names director**
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New state board names director

BY CASSIE COPE

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Members of the S.C. Fiscal Accountability Authority chose Grant Gillespie to lead that agency Tuesday.

Gillespie has years of experience serving the state of South Carolina, said Gov. Nikki Haley, who chairs the board, created by government restructuring to take over some of

the responsibilities of the state Budget and Control Board.

Gillespie has worked at Labor, Licensing and Regulation for the past five years and before that worked in the administration of then-Gov. Mark Sanford, Haley said.

The board also approved eliminating 551 full-time

employee positions that have been vacant for more than a year

If the state has open positions, they should not let them sit vacant, Haley said.

Instead, the state should analyze if the right pay is being offered to fill a job or if the position is needed, she said.

Title: **Gov.: Federal agency owes SC \$1M daily in 2016**
 Author: By SEANNA ADCOX The Associated Press
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Gov.: Federal agency owes SC \$1M daily in 2016

By SEANNA ADCOX
 The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Gov. Nikki Haley has warned the U.S. Department of Energy that 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.

Because 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 subject 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's 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 nearly \$8 billion project is more than \$3 billion over budget.

Wilson, whose district includes SRS, said Tuesday that the project is about 70 percent complete. He applauded Haley's move, calling MOX the "only viable, legal option" under the agreement with Russia. Other benefits, he said, include that it "converts weapons-grade plutonium into green fuel."

The initial 2002 federal law that set timetables for MOX production or plutonium's removal from the state allowed for million-dollar fines beginning in 2011. But in 2005, Congress extended the deadlines to 2014. Congress extended them again in 2013.

"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."

In September, Attorney General Alan Wilson warned the Department of Energy 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. 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.

Title: **Bomb-grade plutonium stockpile rankles leaders**
 Author: BY SAMMY FRETWELL sfretwell@ thestate.com
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 Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



Bomb-grade plutonium stockpile rankles leaders

BY SAMMY FRETWELL
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Gov. Nikki Haley said Tuesday the federal government must either neutralize plutonium at the Savannah River Site or ship the deadly atomic material away from South Carolina as U.S. officials promised more than a decade ago.

Haley and Attorney General Alan Wilson are considering legal action against the federal government over its failure to get rid of the surplus plutonium that has been stockpiled at the site from around the country. A deadline to take action is looming next year.

"They made an agreement with the state of South Carolina," Haley said. "It is my job to enforce that they stay true to the agreement with the state of South Carolina. So we are going to just actively remind them that they are coming up on the deadline."

Under a 2003 federal law, the U.S. Department of Energy is supposed to

Feds face fines if deadline not met, state leaders say
Governor, attorney general consider legal action

have begun processing the plutonium at a new mixed oxide fuel factory on SRS by now. But the plant is only 70 percent completed and billions of dollars over budget. Haley has supported construction of the plant at SRS in the past.

Because the plant won't be finished anytime soon, the federal government is liable to pay up to \$1 million per day in fines. The DOE has signaled it wants to abandon the MOX project because of its expense — already at \$5 billion and rising. A federal site in New Mexico is an option for plutonium disposal from SRS.

Tom Clements, a longtime anti-nuclear activist and MOX plant opponent, said the 2003 law Haley is seeking to enforce is full of loopholes that allow the federal government freedom to avoid penalties.

"There are so many hurdles in the law that it is impractical to carry it

out," he said, noting Congress would have to appropriate money to pay fines to South Carolina.

Speaking to reporters Tuesday, Haley said she's not interested in collecting fines, but making sure the weapons grade plutonium isn't left in South Carolina as waste. She expressed her concerns in a letter Monday to U.S. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz that said the state "cannot stand idly by."

"It wasn't about the money," Haley said. "It was about actually dealing with the plutonium that was sitting there. The fact that they are not doing that is a concern. We will have to figure out what to do next. I don't want South Carolina just sitting with this waste."

Asked if Haley still wants to complete the MOX plant, spokeswoman Chaney Adams said, "The governor supports following through on the agree-

ment between South Carolina and DOE. We are not seeing any movement toward processing or moving the weapons grade plutonium."

U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn, D-Columbia, said Tuesday the MOX project needs to be completed. Project boosters, which also include U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-Seneca, have championed the project as a way to meet an international nuclear non proliferation agreement, provide fuel for atomic power plants, and provide jobs for South Carolina.

Clyburn said he's working to "get the administration not to move against the program."

Plutonium is a highly toxic nuclear material used in production of atomic bombs, but the nation no longer needs all of the plutonium it produced. Much of the material has been sent to SRS from other federal weapons facilities in the past 15 years for processing into MOX, despite complaints that it could be left in the state forever.



The Aiken
Leader
Wagener, SC
Circ. 0
From Page:
3
12/4/2015
68380



148 Our enemy is right in front of us in plain view

Dear Editor,

If you are not aware of what's going on, it's because you are not paying attention. Our enemy is right in front of us in plain view. They give us lip service, but actually do the opposite. They are called necon.

Let's give three recent examples.

(1) U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham, who positions himself as a war hawk against ISIS is co-sponsoring legislation to nearly double the amount of funding ,

Washington spends on refugees from Syria.

(2) Our friend, Rep. Joe Wilson voted for "Fast Track," which enables the passage of the Trans-Pacific Partnership. The Trans-Pacific Partnership passes itself off as "Free Trade." Free

Trade is when we trade with one another without government interference. It is 10% about trade and 90% about giving our country sovereign away. Trans-Pacific Partnership , along with the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership are

stepping stones to the One-World Government, also know as the New World Order/United Nations.

(3) Our third example is our Gov. Nikki Haley, who recently backtracked on her support for unvetted Muslim's Syria refugees

Look no further than the people we put into office. We have met the enemy. They are us.

Thank you,
Andy Windham



Charleston
Chronicle
Charleston, SC
Circ. 6000
From Page:
1
12/2/2015
68128



Aluminum Plant Employees Asking 148 For Help In Saving Their Jobs

By Barney Blakeney

Employees of Century Aluminum's Mt. Holly Aluminum smelting plant in Goose Creek hope to avoid a needless shut-down in production that would have a significant negative economic impact on its workforce

and approximately 2,100 jobs in the Metropolitan Charleston region.

The Mt. Holly plant has been located in Goose Creek some 35 years and is among the area's highest paying businesses with an annual payroll of between \$50 million-\$60 million. The plant

has meant quality jobs and wages to its workforce that resides primarily in Berkeley, Dorchester and Charleston counties. But the plant's financial arm reaches further and has an economic impact of nearly \$1 billion regionally. **see pg 3**





Aluminum...

- cont. from pg. 1

That impact touches residents of some 11 counties, according to plant officials.

The Goose Creek plant previously was wholly owned by Alcoa Aluminum and has meant a higher quality of life to past and present employees over three decades. Workers supported families, sent children to college and some now are enjoying retirement with grandchildren due in large part to employment at the plant. That's about to change for current workers if Century Aluminum officials can't reach an agreement with state-owned electrical supplier Santee

Cooper.

Century took full ownership of the plant a year ago and six months ago began negotiating with Santee Cooper for a new power supply contract. Since 2012 the smelting plant which is North America's most efficient, has been running with a blend of power sources that incorporates 75 percent from an out of state provider and 25 percent from Santee Cooper. All of the power comes into the plant over Santee Cooper lines. In July Santee Cooper refused to renew its contract.

Power costs that have been increasing the past 15 years and cheaper imported aluminum makes production at Century more costly, said Plant Manager Dennis Gregory. To cut costs Century wants to get all its power from its cheaper out of

state provider and pay Santee Cooper to pump it in.

Santee Cooper wants to provide all the plant's power at a rate about 40 percent higher than any other provider in the U.S., Gregory said. That would force closure, he said. Even if Century got half the power it needs from Santee Cooper the plant would lose \$10 million-\$20 million next year. That's unsustainable, he said.

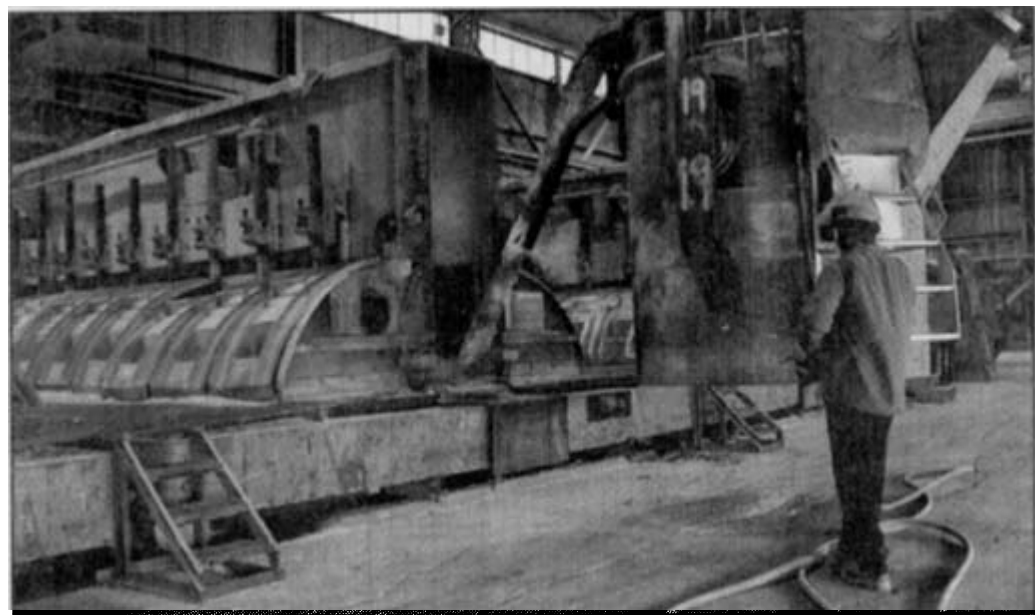
Century says it would reduce production by half its capacity and has offered to buy all the power it needs from Santee Cooper for about a year as a concession, but Santee Cooper won't budge, Gregory said. Unless Santee Cooper relinquishes in the high stakes power play Century plans to shut down operations December 30.

Human Resources Manager Marvin Dickerson says that's un-

fathomable. Unless Santee Cooper accepts Century's proposal, the plants closes and employees lose their jobs, he said. The average employee earns \$50,000-\$55,000 annually with benefits totaling about \$92,000 annually.

With their backs against the wall Century employees are asking for help from their community. Gov. Nikki Haley has refused to influence Santee Cooper on Century's behalf so they're depending on people to call their state representatives, Santee Cooper Board of Directors members and local government officials to let them know how much the plant impacts their lives and the community.

"Closing this plant is unfathomable when so many people benefit and we have a workable solution." Dickerson said.



An employee tapping metal at Century Aluminum



Columbia Star
Columbia, SC
Circ. 775
From Page:
13
12/4/2015
67102



148
Haley intervenes for farmers
Gov. Nikki Haley is asking the U.S. Agriculture Department to expedite crop insurance payments to farmers who suffered nearly \$600 million in losses from last month's flooding. In a letter to Agriculture Secretary Thomas Vilsack, Haley said that while the state is receiving some federal support, farmers are not seeing a fast enough turnaround time in order to recover losses. She said soybean, peanut, and cotton crops specifically have suffered the most severe losses.

Journal-Scene
 Summerville, SC
 Circ. 5929
 From Page:
 1
 12/4/2015
 64234



148 Roads 'single biggest issue'

S.C. group seeks funds for repairs

JENNA-LEY HARRISON
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A statewide grassroots organization is pushing for major road improvements throughout the state.

In November, the South Carolina Alliance to Fix Our Roads issued a petition on infrastructure reform with a goal to obtain at least 2,000 signatures.

According to Jordan Marsh, associate director for the alliance, 2,111 people signed it, including 60 in Senate District 38, represented by Sen. Sean Bennett, R-Dorchester.

Each petition is a letter addressed to the legislator representing the signor.

The petition says it supports a "sustainable and recurring infrastructure bill."

By signing the letter, individuals back "a reasonable increase in the motor fuel user fee" and "enacting other recurring revenue sources to be used exclusively" for road repair.



Jenna-Ley Harrison/Journal Scene

One of numerous potholes located along S.C. 165 near Ashley Ridge High School.

The letter also states that October's historic flooding "caused catastrophic damages to our already crumbling infrastructure" — a picture of ruin Rep. Chris Murphy, R-North Charleston, alluded to in November.

"We have to do something...or it's going to crumble as it already has," he said during the annual legislative luncheon Nov. 19.

The grassroots alliance issued the petition to 36 local chambers and at least 17 statewide associations, Marsh said. That included the Greater Summerville/Dorchester County Chamber of Commerce, which distributed it to each of its own respective members and board.

The local chamber sent a letter on the issue to Gov. Nikki Haley earlier this year.

The chamber letter stated that poor road conditions are affecting the local economy and quality of life.

"We can't wait another year for increased funding to address this issue," the letter stated.

Chamber Chair Mac Baughman, with WestRock, reiterated the letter's chief point.

"You can't continue to grow a local business

See **ROADS**, Page 8A



Roads

from page 1A

community here without providing infrastructure to support it," he said.

Baughman and fellow chamber board member Robbie Robbins, a local attorney, both said they signed the alliance's petition.

"I am very much in favor of the legislature coming up with an annual funding formula for our roads and bridges regarding maintenance, repair and construction," Robbins said. "You can't neglect something for 20 to 30 years."

Robbins said DOT's \$1.5 billion annual estimate to fund infrastructure during the next three decades is simply impossible.

"This is not a number that can be achieved through the regular budgeting process," he said.

Robbins said the issue has affected local and statewide commerce, forcing businesses not to locate here. Bennett echoed his sentiment.

"It's a heavy lift but affects everything from movement of people, to safety, to commerce," he said.

During the same luncheon, Bennett spoke boldly about his support of fixing state roads and how they're funded. He told local chamber members and business leaders that he's "not a huge fan" of the current infrastructure bill (House Bill 3579), which he said "falls short of the necessary solutions."

He said he hopes to amend the bill with his three-pronged approach, which calls for DOT reform — making it "as efficient and effective as possible" — along with a dedicated funding source for repairing and improving infrastructure, and



Jenna-Ley Harrison/Journal Scene

A pothole located at the entrance to a gas station at the corner of South Main Street and East Richardson Avenue in downtown Summerville.

a reduction in the state's "very steep" income tax rates.

He said the Senate Finance Committee has its own version of the bill which is "strictly a revenue increasing bill" without DOT reform or income tax relief. However he doesn't support it or think it will pass.

In an op-ed he wrote on his political website in May, he said the reform bill he and other Republicans are proposing would cut at least \$700 million in state income tax in the first five years.

Per taxpayer, that's a 17 percent reduction, he said. Bennett wrote that it would be "one of the largest across-the-board tax cuts" in state history and "help empower our people and control government spending for years to come."

"The bill I am proposing will reduce all income tax brackets 1 percent over five years," he said in an email to the Journal Scene this week. "This reduction is projected to not negatively affect the general fund

growth rates, which indicates to me that returning money to the taxpayers is not only possible but appropriate as our economy grows."

Bennett also said road funding should funnel directly to county transportation committees rather than through DOT.

He said such committees work faster and more efficiently than the state agency and resulted in a 430 percent increase in Dorchester County's CTC allocation last year alone.

"That money will get to roads almost immediately," he said.

Bennett said he hopes to get the current House bill, right now on special order, heard as early as possible in January, when the next legislative session starts, with an initial goal to amend it.

"I am committed to solving our road problems. ... It's the single biggest issue facing South Carolina for the next several decades," he said.

To view the petition, visit the S.C. Alliance to Fix Our Roads website.

Journal-Scene
Summerville, SC
Circ. 5929
From Page:
3
12/4/2015
64234



The News
 Kingstree, SC
 Circ. 4587
 From Page:
 5
 12/2/2015
 64159



^{64 + 148} *Mental health continues flood relief supports, launches Carolina United*

The South Carolina Department of Mental Health (DMH) is pleased to announce the launch of a program designed to guide members of the communities affected by the October floods to resources that will aid in their continued recovery.

Carolina United, which currently comprises 26 team members, including 22 crisis counselors, is fully funded by the Federal Emergency Management Administration with monitoring and support by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

The initiative places these counselors in affected areas, to guide citizens not only to behavioral health resources, but also legal, financial, housing, and other resources as well. "We'll be sending team members to several areas of South Carolina," said Program Director Jay Little.

"We are beginning with the Midlands, Orangeburg, Sumter, and Georgetown areas, providing outreach to 20 counties in these communities."

"The FEMA grant will allow the DMH to continue its efforts to serve the people of South Carolina after these devastating floods," said DMH Deputy Director and Community Mental Health Services Director Geoffrey J. Mason.

"Outreach staff will help to get citizens connected to the varied help they need to recover from this disaster and will supplement the ongoing work of DMH master's level counselors, who are offering behavioral health services at Disaster Recovery Centers, mental health centers and other locations across the state."

The Crisis Counseling Program hopes to add another 50 outreach workers in an effort to serve South Carolinians in the 24 counties now named in the Presidential Disaster Declaration. By the end of January 2016, these teams could be serving citizens across the state.

"This is not a new activity," said DMH Disaster Response Coordinator William Wells.

"Almost from the time the rain began to fall, DMH's mental health centers have provid-

ed staff to assist in American Red Cross Evacuation Shelters, FEMA's Disaster Recovery Centers, and Governor Nikki Haley's Team South Carolina town-hall meetings.

We will continue to provide mental health supports at the Recovery Centers as long as they remain open."

To learn more about Carolina United or reach a crisis counselor in your area, call (803) 898-8399.

The South Carolina Department of Mental Health's mission is to support the recovery of people with mental illnesses, giving priority to adults with serious and persistent mental illness and to children and adolescents with serious emotional disturbances.

The agency serves approximately 100,000 citizens with mental illnesses, approximately 30,000 of whom are children and adolescents, and provides outpatient services through a network of 17 community mental health centers and numerous clinics. It also operates four hospitals



Lancaster News
Lancaster, SC
Circ. 12696
From Page:
5
12/2/2015
62165



148 + 95 Governor's mansion holds Christmas Open House

From release

COLUMBIA – Gov. Nikki Haley and her family invite South Carolinians to join them for a Christmas Open House from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Dec. 7 at the Governor's Mansion.

The free, public event requires no reservations. The first family asks that guests bring canned goods to be donated to the Harvest Hope Food Bank. The donations will be accepted at the entrance to the mansion, which is at 800 Richland St., Columbia.

The Columbia Garden Club, which has decorated the mansion for Christmas every year since 1981, began decorating this week when the mansion received two live Christmas trees from the S.C. Christmas Tree Growers Association and poinsettias grown by the Future Farmers of America from Lexington Technology Center – all of which will be on display during the open house.

Governor's Mansion Executive Chef Steven Jankowski will build a

classic gingerbread house, and wreaths within the mansion complex will be made and hung by the Horticulture Division of the S.C. Department of Corrections. The Carillon Carolers of Columbia will perform for guests.

Regular guided Christmas tours are available Dec. 8-10 and 15-17 at 10, 10:30 and 11 a.m. They are also free, but are by reservation only.

Anyone interested in scheduling a tour should call Nancy Bunch at (803) 737-1710.