

From: Taillon, Jeff
To: Taillon, Jeff <JeffTaillon@gov.sc.gov>
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Governor Nikki Haley News

The State: Marion County lands record \$54 million plant, up to 215 jobs

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/03/27/2696592/food-maker-to-build-54-million.html>

Andy Shain

The county with the state's worst unemployment rate will get a boost from a Florida food maker opening a plant in downtown Marion. Essex Holdings will spend \$54.4 million on a rice packaging and distribution plant that could employ up to 215 people, Gov. Nikki Haley and state commerce department officials announced Wednesday.

Note: Haley hailed the plant as a win for rural areas. Her foundation, called The Original Six, held in Marion County a health-and-job fair last year in Mullins, about 10 miles from Marion. Essex Holdings and its chief executive Navin Xavier have not donated to Haley's campaign, according to S.C. Ethics Commission records.

Associated Press: Essex expects to create 215 jobs in Marion

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

Staff Report

Essex Holdings Inc. says it's building a new plant in rural Marion and creating 215 jobs. The Miami-based global producer and trader of commodities announced Wednesday it's investing \$54.4 million in the facility expected to open this summer. Hiring should begin in May.

Note: Gov. Nikki Haley says the company's decision to locate in Marion is a big win for the state's rural areas.

Post and Courier: Road money is needed for a healthy Port of Charleston (Opinion)

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130328/PC1002/130329293/1021/road-money-is-needed-for-a-healthy-port-of-charleston>

Ron Brinson

With its putative linkage to all economic development trends in South Carolina, is there a state-controlled economic asset more popular than the Port of Charleston? I doubt it. And for those of us who think that's a good thing, I say give Jim Newsome some leadership props. In just a few years, he's gained the ears of the Legislature and the governor, offering a convincing case that the port is a golden publicly owned enterprise; and if Charleston Harbor channels can just be deepened from 45 to 50 feet, Charleston will once again dominate among South Atlantic ports.

Note: There are bills pending that would raise the fuel tax and index it to inflation. Other bills would direct sales taxes on vehicles to road funding. Gov. Haley has talked about directing \$100 million of unanticipated revenues to DOT projects.

Post and Courier: Obamacare prognosis: Broken promises (Opinion)

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130328/PC1002/130329289/1021/obamacare-prognosis-broken-promises>

Editorial

President Barack Obama repeatedly assured Americans that his sweeping health care reform initiative would not adversely affect their medical insurance. As he put it while pitching that proposal in July 2009: "If you've got health insurance, you like your doctors, you like your plan, you can keep your doctor, you can keep your plan. Nobody is talking about taking that away from you."

Note: Keep that presidential "stretch" in mind while pondering whether Gov. Nikki Haley has made the right call by rejecting pleas that South Carolina participate in Obamacare's Medicaid expansion. Keep in mind, too, that the ill effects induced by the Affordable Care Act aren't limited to rising insurance costs.

The State: Report: Updating SC voting machines will cost millions

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/03/27/2696374/report-updating-electronic-voting.html>

Adam Beam

It would cost taxpayers \$17.3 million to upgrade the state's electronic voting machines to produce a paper record of votes, but a report by the Legislative Audit Council questions whether the investment would be worth the expense. The report notes that "without paper ballots, the reconstruction of the votes cast is not possible to help resolve disputed results. But the report says paper ballots "undermine the voting access of people with disabilities" and that hand counting ballots always introduces "human error."

Note: The State Election Commission sends a list every month to the Governor's Office of election officials who have not complied with certification standards. But Haley's office said they were "provided inaccurate information" by the State Election Commission, noting that 30 percent of the names on the list "were either back in compliance or had resigned." "Our office did in fact take action to resolve this issue," Swati Patel, the governor's chief legal counsel, wrote in a letter to the Legislative Audit Council.

Greenville News: Potential gubernatorial candidate in Greenville today

Democrat Vincent Sheheen could challenge Haley in 2014 rematch

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130328/NEWS/303280025/Potential-gubernatorial-candidate-Greenville-today>

Rudolph Bell

A possible Democratic nominee for governor visits Greenville today. State Sen. Vincent Sheheen of Camden ran for governor in 2010, losing to Republican Nikki Haley by less than 5 percentage points, and may run again in 2014.

Greenville News: Sen. Tim Scott favors slow rise of retirement age

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130328/NEWS/303280022/Sen-Tim-Scott-favors-slow-rise-retirement-age>

David Dykes

U.S. Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina said Wednesday he favors eventually raising the Social Security retirement age to 69 or 70 to make sure the program remains solvent. Scott, in an interview with editors and reporters at GreenvilleOnline.com, said gradually adjusting the full retirement age wouldn't apply to anyone now 55 or older.

Note: Scott, a Republican, recently was appointed by Gov. Nikki Haley to replace Jim DeMint. Scott will run in a special election in 2014 for the final two years of DeMint's second term.

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South Carolina News

Greenville News: Income growing for S.C. residents

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130328/BUSINESS/303280007/Income-growing-S-C-residents>

Woody White
South Carolina's personal income growth barely topped the national average in 2012, partly the result of better employment numbers for the year. Incomes grew 3.6 percent in the Palmetto State last year, compared with a national average that slowed from 5.2 percent in 2011 to 3.5 percent last year.

Associated Press: Bills would allow in-state SC tuition for veterans

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

Seanna Adcox

Legislators want to make it easier for veterans to go to college in South Carolina by paying tuition at in-state rates, though bills differ on how to do that. Rep. Joe Daning, R-Goose Creek, said the effort is about honoring veterans in this military-friendly state. He said he also hopes it serves as a recruitment tool for a state with a veteran population that already exceeds 400,000, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Associated Press: States that let veterans pay in-state tuition

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=NE2XoE0n

Staff Report

At least 19 states already allow veterans to pay in-state tuition, either through state law or by college policy.

Post and Courier: Set gambling issues straight (Opinion)

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130328/PC1002/130329290/1021/set-gambling-issues-straight>
Editorial

The way it stands now, a church that raffles off a pizza dinner for six is breaking the law. But a business that lures people in to gamble money playing Internet games is in the clear. One is raising money to send aid to Nicaragua. The other could be enticing people to lose their grocery budgets.

Associated Press: Report: Election machines retrofit would cost \$17M

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=PIV4CH3M

Seanna Adcox

An audit of the state Elections Commission shows it would cost more than \$17 million to retrofit South Carolina's existing electronic voting machines to produce a paper trail. Much of the Legislative Audit County report released Wednesday focuses on the system's inability to produce an auditable paper trail to verify votes.

Post and Courier: S.C. voting machine fix would cost \$17 million

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130328/PC16/130329276/1005/sc-voting-machine-fix-would-cost-17-million>

Robert Behre

South Carolina would have to spend \$17 million to retrofit its voting machines to produce a paper trail, which some consider essential for upholding the public's trust in election results, a new audit says. The Legislative Audit Council report, released Wednesday, found that there have been errors attributed to the iVotronic machines, which the state's 46 counties have used for almost a decade.

Greenville News: Find a way to keep SCTAC's tower (Opinion)

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130328/OPINION/303280008/Editorial-Find-way-keep-SCTAC-s-tower>

Editorial

The Federal Aviation Administration is being shortsighted in its decision to close 149 airport control towers, including one at the South Carolina Technology and Aviation Center in southern Greenville County, as a result of sequestration. Sequestration is the name for more than \$1 trillion in budget cuts over the next 10 years that were the fruit of failed efforts to cut federal deficits. The tower closures put Congress' inability to have an adult conversation about prudent spending above the safety of pilots and passengers at some of our country's smaller airports. This failure is yet another example of the short-sighted fallibility of across-the-board mandated cuts.

The State: SC college boards short on women

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/03/26/2695720/sc-college-boards-short-on-women.html>

Adam Beam

Melissa Johnson Emory was the first of her family to go to college, graduating with a degree from Francis Marion University in 1991 that propelled her to a successful legal career. Now, Emory is one of three women on the 16-member Francis Marion board of trustees – and she is in danger of losing her seat to a man. Because of restructuring, she has to run for re-election against Randall Dozier, the board's chairman.

Post and Courier: Qualified women face a paradox (Opinion)

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130328/PC16/130329270/1005/balog-column-qualified-women-face-a-paradox>

Melanie Balog

Well, this probably isn't what the folks at Project XX had in mind. This is the week that candidates for college boards are being vetted by a legislative committee in Columbia. Project XX (Double-X) is lobbying for more women board members, because they are severely under-represented — despite being 51 percent of the state's population.

Associated Press: No Carrier Classic basketball in SC this year

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=IXQ3BeLv

Staff Report

There will be no second act for the Carrier Classic basketball games on the USS Yorktown in Charleston Harbor. The executive director of the Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum said Wednesday there will be no attempt to stage basketball games on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier in November.

Associated Press: Clyburn to deliver lecture on forebears at USC

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=ChIDGP38

Staff Report

U.S. Rep. James Clyburn is speaking on the legacy of the nation's African-American forebears at the University of South Carolina. The South Carolina Democrat is delivering the Robert Smalls Lecture Thursday at 7:30 p.m. It is free and open to the public

Associated Press: Bostic, Sanford to meet in 1st District debate

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=CCU6cA53

Bruce Smith

Former Gov. Mark Sanford and former Charleston County Councilman Curtis Bostic are set to meet in a debate less than one week before the GOP runoff in the state's 1st Congressional District. The two are scheduled to meet Thursday night in Charleston.

Post and Courier: Bostic, Sanford meet tonight as race heats up

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130328/PC16/130329273/1005/bostic-sanford-meet-tonight-as-race-heats-up>

Robert Behre

Former GOP presidential hopeful Rick Santorum said Mark Sanford, like all people, deserves a second chance, but he's backing Curtis Bostic in the 1st Congressional District race. "Washington needs some fresh faces, some folks who are from the grass roots," Santorum said during an appearance Wednesday with Bostic at a North Charleston auto service store.

Associated Press: Santorum: Bostic a fresh SC face for Washington

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=eQihh2yO

Bruce Smith

Former Republican presidential candidate Rick Santorum said Wednesday that Curtis Bostic is the fresh, conservative face that South Carolina's 1st Congressional District needs in Washington. Bostic, a former member of the Charleston County Council, is in a runoff with former Gov. Mark Sanford for the GOP nomination in a special election for the seat along the state's south coast. Sanford was the top vote-getter in last week's 16-way GOP primary with Bostic finishing second. They meet in a runoff Tuesday with the winner facing Democrat Elizabeth Colbert Busch in the May primary.

Associated Press: AT&T to visit USC to show texting, driving perils

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=hv3PAgjp

Staff Report

AT&T is scheduled to visit the University of South Carolina campus to talk about the dangers of texting while driving. The company on Thursday is offering students the opportunity to test a simulator that officials say shows how dangerous it is to try to send a text message while behind the wheel. The public can also try out the simulators.

Greenville News: Critics fear bill allowing reorganization of Clemson University would reduce accountability

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130328/NEWS09/303280014/Critics-fear-bill-allowing-reorganization-Clemson-University-would-reduce-accountability>

Ron Barnett

Clemson University is seeking legislative approval to reorganize in ways that would make it easier for the school to respond to rapidly changing economic opportunities and streamline non-academic operations. Critics fear the legislation would create a system that is unaccountable to taxpayers — a fear the university said is unfounded.

The State: 1963 marked pivotal moment in integration of SC state parks

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/03/28/2697471/1963-marked-pivotal-moment-in.html>

Joey Holleman

Fifty years ago this spring, state leaders were arguing in federal court in favor of separate-but-hardly-equal state parks for blacks and whites. The integration of the state park system gets less attention in the history books than similar efforts in schools and businesses. But the battle over parks was extremely contentious in its own way.

The State: Boeing CEO says 787 is 'very close' to flying

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/03/28/2697871/boeing-ceo-says-787-is-very-close.html>

Scott Mayerowitz

Boeing CEO Jim McNerney is sure his company is "very close" to getting its troubled 787 Dreamliner jet back flying again. "We have a high degree of confidence in the technical solution we are testing right now with the FAA," McNerney said Thursday. "I think it will be sooner than later."

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Hyperlocal News

The State: BB&T headquarters is moving to Main Street

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/03/27/2697159/bbt-headquarters-is-moving-to.html>

Kristy Eppley Rupon

A large BB&T logo will be added atop The Capitol Center when the bank moves its Midlands headquarters into the building at 1201 Main St. next year. BB&T becomes the third bank in three months to announce plans to move its state or local headquarters to the redeveloping Main Street corridor – an intersection for business, commerce and residential development that location bank officials called "highly desirable."

Associated Press: Beaufort worries about tower close before tourney

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

Staff Report

Beaufort County officials are worried about the closure of the Hilton Head Island Airport tower before this year's RBC Heritage golf tournament next month. The Federal Aviation Administration plans to close Hilton Head's tower and 148 others at small airports April 7 because of federal budget cuts.

The State: Camden gears up for year's big race

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/03/27/2697365/camden-gears-up-for-years-big.html>

Roddie Burris

The Carolina Cup steeplechase races have a one-day \$5 million impact on Camden and surrounding areas each year. But the Easter holiday – which falls on the same weekend this year – could cut into that bounty. Still, organizers, buoyed by forecasts for superb weather, are preparing for a crowd this Saturday.

Post and Courier: Firm withdraws bid for Charleston airport contract after inquiry launched

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130328/PC16/130329265/1005/firm-withdraws-bid-for-charleston-airport-contract-after-inquiry-launched>

Warren Wise

A firm competing for a contract at Charleston International Airport withdrew its offer Wednesday after questions about Charleston County Aviation Authority board members' involvement in recommending subcontractors in its bid. Columbia-based Michael Baker Corp., the firm hired by the airport as its program manager for the \$200 million makeover of the airport's terminal building, decided to withdraw as one of two bidders for the construction administration and inspection contract, the firm announced during an airport committee meeting.

Post and Courier: Mark Clark Expressway extension loses interstate designation

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130328/PC16/130329259/1005/mark-clark-expressway-extension-loses-interstate-designation>

Diane Knich

The final stretch of the Mark Clark Expressway across Johns and James islands won't be called Interstate 526. Jim Armstrong, Charleston County's director of transportation development, said the road will lose its designation because the last 8 miles of the expressway loop will be built as a 35 mph to 45 mph parkway instead of a traditional interstate.

Associated Press: Parole denied for former SC coach

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=iB1oRHb6

Staff Report

A former youth basketball coach in Columbia who is spending 35 years in prison for molesting more than a dozen boys has been rejected for parole. A panel of the state parole board voted unanimously Wednesday to reject parole for 56-year-old Chuck Sullivan. The board had rejected previous attempts by Sullivan.

The State: Richland taxpayers shouldn't have to pay for Columbia Venture's high-stakes failure (Opinion)

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/03/28/2696894/bolton-richland-taxpayers-shouldnt.html>

Warren Bolton

It's long been time for the owners of 4,460 acres of mostly flood-prone land along the Congaree River to admit the truth: Their dream of building a "city within a city" called Green Diamond went under because it couldn't float — literally or figuratively — not because of anything Richland County did.

The State: Columbia's Assembly Street getting makeover near USC

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/03/27/2697244/columbias-assembly-street-getting.html>

Andy Shain

The days of University of South Carolina students making mad dashes across Assembly Street could be over by the next winter break. The school is working with local and state officials on a \$4.65 million makeover of the medians and sidewalks along a four-block section between Blossom and Pendleton streets

Greenville News: Envision SC: Ford cites need to pool together in Palmetto State

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130328/NEWS09/303280012/Envision-SC-Ford-cites-need-pool-together-Palmetto-State>

Making Your Voice Heard

Few people will ever truly understand the complicated and peculiar history of South Carolina the way that Dr. Lacy K. Ford Jr., does. Having dedicated his life to the study of the South and 19th and 20th Century American History, Dr. Ford is well acquainted with the economic glory years of the state. His vast wealth of historical knowledge has driven him to publish a number of books, essays, and articles on various aspects of the South and South Carolina. As a noted historian, Ford is well equipped to enlighten South Carolinians on the mistakes of the past, and a possible road map for the future.

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National News

McClatchy: Gay-marriage debate day 2: Supreme Court takes up Defense of Marriage Act

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/03/27/2696536/gay-marriage-debate-day-2-supreme.html>

Michael Doyle

The federal Defense of Marriage Act may be hanging by a thread after a Supreme Court oral argument Wednesday that exposed sharp divisions over the 1996 law prohibiting same-sex married couples from obtaining myriad federal benefits. A day after confronting California's Proposition 8, which bans same-sex marriage, justices showed similar splits over whether the federal government may deny benefits to couples married in the nine states that recognize gay marriage. The division during an unusually long oral argument largely fell along traditional lines, with Justice Anthony Kennedy once again holding the middle ground.

Associated Press: Interior Dept. cuts mineral payments to 35 states

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

Ben Neary

The U.S. Department of Interior is cutting federal mineral payments to 35 states by about \$110 million this fiscal year as part of the automatic federal spending cuts that started this month. Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead announced this week that his state faces the biggest cut - at least \$53 million over the next five months. Wyoming is the nation's leading coal-producing state and last year received nearly \$1 billion in federal mineral payments.

Associated Press: GOP ponders long list of names, policies, for 2016

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130328/PC1603/130329284/1005/gop-ponders-long-list-of-names-policies-for-2016>

Charles Babington

Republicans' search for a way back to presidential success is drawing a striking array of personalities and policy options, creating a wide-open self-reassessment of the party. GOP activists may need three full years to decide which candidate and which philosophy will serve them best in 2016. Rival factions are trying to tug the party left or right, toward pragmatism or defiance, toward small-government purity versus pride in the good that government can do.

Associated Press: A look at US government's cuts in mineral payments

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=36tGWi37

Staff Report

The U.S. Department of Interior is cutting payments to 35 states as a result of the automatic federal spending cuts that took effect this month. A list of the cuts, which total \$110.86 million:

Associated Press: Records provide new look at Ariz. shooting spree

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130328/PC1601/130329283/1005/records-provide-new-look-at-ariz-shooting-spre>

Brian Skoloff and Jacques Billeaud

Documents released Wednesday detailing the shooting of former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords show how the gunman had grown increasingly erratic and delusional in the months leading up to the rampage as he alienated friends and family and became paranoid that police were out to get him. The roughly 2,700 pages included witness and survivor accounts from people who helped save Giffords' life after she was shot in the head outside a Tucson supermarket in 2011 during a meet-and-greet with constituents. Six people were killed and 11 were wounded.

Lexington Herald-Leader: Ashley Judd tells Twitter followers she will not run for Kentucky's U.S. Senate seat

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/03/27/2696987/ashley-judd-tells-twitter-followers.html>

Linda B. Blackford

Actress Ashley Judd will not challenge U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell's seat in 2016, she announced late Wednesday. "Regretfully, I am currently unable to consider a campaign for the Senate," she said in a series of messages on Twitter.com. "I have spoken to so many Kentuckians over these last few months who expressed their desire for a fighter for the people & new leader.

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Jeff Taillon

(803) 734-5129|Direct Line

(803) 767-7653|Cell