



Marlboro Herald
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148 Deadline is near for high school diploma petitions

By LYNN McQUEEN

Time is running out for former students who did not receive diplomas because of the high school exit exam to apply for them under a new South Carolina law.

Act 155, signed into law by Gov. Nikki Haley in April, eliminated the high school exit exam in favor of new tests (Work Keys and The ACT), which were administered for the first time this year.

With the exit exam, students had to pass both sections (English and math) by the end of their senior year or they did not receive diplomas, even if they had earned all the credits necessary to graduate.

Act 155 made the elimination of the exit exam requirement retroactive to 1990, meaning that anyone who was denied a diploma from 1990 forward, simply on the basis of the exit exam, may now be eligible to receive that diploma.

All a candidate has to do is petition his or her local school board to be granted a diploma. Once a petition is approved, it is sent to the State Department of Education for processing. This normally takes 4-6 weeks.

So far, nearly 6,000 diplomas have been issued statewide since the process began shortly after Act 155 became law. But it has a deadline: December 31. That means anyone who is eligible for a high school diploma under the act must submit his or her petition to the school board by then.

For more information, visit <http://ed.sc.gov/newsroom/public-information-resources/high-school-exit-exam-elimination/>

1521¹⁴⁸ revealed: Boise Cascade expanding

Staff reports

Boise Cascade, the parent company of Chester Wood Products in Chester, has announced a \$23.5 million expansion expected to create 52 new jobs in Chester County.

Boise Cascade Company (NYSE: BCC) is one of the largest producers of plywood and engineered wood products in North America and a leading U.S. wholesale distributor of

building products.

Boise Cascade acquired Chester Wood Products in 2013, establishing the company's first operations in South Carolina.

Operating today as Chester Plywood, Boise Cascade has decided to expand its Chester County operations in an effort to better serve its growing customer base.

With respect to its investment in the facility, which is located at 1445 Lancaster Highway in

Chester, Boise Cascade has already begun installing new equipment and expanding the warehouse.

With a heritage dating back to 1957, and headquartered in Boise, Idaho, Boise Cascade manufactures engineered wood products, plywood, lumber and particleboard. As a national dis-

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BOISE

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tributor, the company operates more than 30 distribution centers across the U.S.

Hiring for the new positions began in the third quarter of 2015, and will continue through the first quarter of 2016. Those interested in joining the Boise Cascade team should visit the company's careers page online. For more information on the company, visit www.bc.com.

The Coordinating Council for Economic Development has approved a \$100,000 Rural Infrastructure Fund grant to Chester County to assist with the costs of real property improvements.

"We have so many great corporate citizens, like Boise Cascade, that are the driving force behind our economic development momentum, because they prove to the world that there is no better place to be doing business each time they decide to expand in our state," said Gov. Nikki Haley.

"We look forward to seeing the positive impact that this new \$23.5 million investment, and the 52 new jobs it will create, will have in Chester County."

Chester County Supervisor Shane Stuart said, "Today's announcement from Boise Cascade is more good news for Chester County. With this announcement being about an existing industrial partner, this is a demonstration of the pro-business atmosphere and dedicated leadership in Chester County. Like we always say, it's a great day to live and work in Chester County."

Chester County Development Association Chair Brian Singleton agrees.

"The Boise Cascade expansion is a great addition to our existing industrial base in Chester County. They are obviously pleased with the success of their South Carolina operations and we are excited that they continue to choose Chester," he said.

S.C. Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt said, "South Carolina's manufacturing industry continues to prosper, and today, we celebrate yet another victory for that sector with the announcement that Boise Cascade is expanding its Chester plant. Congratulations to the company and the people of Chester on this terrific partnership," Hitt said.

And Boise Cascade Company Southeastern

Area Manager Chris Seymour added, "This \$23.5 million investment shows the confidence that the company has in our more than 350 employees in South Carolina and represents a sound investment in the future of this facility and of this company. Thank you to everyone who helped make this happen."

This project was discussed at length on several occasions recently by Chester County Council. It was operating under the code name "Project: 1521."

Fast facts: Boise Cascade expansion

- Boise Cascade Company is expanding operations in Chester County.
- \$23.5 million investment creating 52 new jobs.
- Headquartered in Boise, Idaho, Boise Cascade manufactures engineered wood products, plywood, lumber and particleboard.
- The facility, which is located at 1445 Lancaster Highway in Chester, will be expanded with the addition of warehouse space, as well as the installation of new equipment.

Those interested in joining the Boise Cascade team should visit the company's careers page online.



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Workforce Development Center Pre-Design Funding Approved

The estimated \$338,000 cost of pre-design services for the new workforce development center at the Oconee Industry and Technology Park will be shared by the school district, which will pay \$202,800 (60 percent) and the county and Tri-County Technical College (TCTC), which will each pay \$67,600 (20 percent each).

This is according to a memorandum of understanding which the County Council unanimously approved at its meeting last Tuesday, and the school district and TCTC have also approved.

The workforce development center will include three facilities: an Oconee County campus of TCTC, a new career center for the school district, and an Economic Development office for the county. The school district is paying 60 percent of the pre-design services cost because its career center will occupy approximately that percentage of the total square-footage.

Pre-design services include a site survey, architectural drawings, and engineering services.

The county's \$67,600 share of the cost will come from its Tri-County Technical College special revenue fund, for which 2.1 mills is included in the budget.

Officials have estimated that construction on the workforce development center is still about two or three years in the future. The location is on Highway 11 between Walhalla and Westminster.

REFUGEE RESOLUTION

By a 4-1 vote, the council decided not to proceed with consideration of a resolution supporting Governor Nikki Haley's opposition to resettling Syrian refugees in South Carolina. The lone vote to proceed with consideration of the resolution was by Tim Cain, who had proposed it at the previous meeting.

The motion not to proceed with consideration was made by Edda Cammick, who said the refugee situation was "not a county issue" and that a resolution would have no legal standing regarding the federal immigration policy.

However, Cain expressed concern about how effectively refugees from the Syrian civil war were being vetted, to ensure they "don't wish harm to this country," and he speculated that a county resolution could have some influence on policymakers.



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Poll: SC GOP voters want mosques monitored

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BY ANDREW SHAIN
The State
ashain@thestate.com

COLUMBIA — With terrorism as their new top 2016 presidential campaign issue, S.C. Republican voters favor monitoring mosques and creating a database of Muslims, according to a new poll.

And most S.C. Republicans say

they think the candidate with the best chance of keeping the United States safe is New York billionaire Donald Trump.

"Trump has has been talking the loudest about this," said Scott Huffmon, director of the Winthrop Poll, which released its latest survey Thursday. "And he's been the best at channeling this fear while expressing total confidence that he can fix

the problem. People tend to like leaders who talk big, simplify complex issues and express bold solutions."

As for criticism that Trump lacks specifics behind his prom-

ises to destroy ISIS, which has been linked to attacks in France and California in recent weeks, Huffmon said the average S.C. GOP voter cares little for details.

"They are concerned with ISIS

being able to reach into America," Huffmon added. "If Muslims can be radicalized in our country, they figure, 'We need to keep an eye on these people.' And the person best articulating that is Donald Trump."

The poll found Trump remains the favorite of Palmetto State Republicans in 2016, having topped 13 of the past 14 major polls taken since July.

"Things could turn on a dime," said Scott Buchanan, a political scientist at The Citadel. "But, for now, Trump seems bulletproof."

Cruz now in second

U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, who has surged nationally in recent weeks, is in second in the new Winthrop survey — his best

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showing in an S.C. poll since April. He received 16 percent support to Trump's 24 percent backing.

Cruz seems to be winning over some Trump backers, who might think the senator is more electable, Winthrop's Huffmon said.

"People are finally hearing (Cruz's) message about his anger against the government," he said. "He's also been good about articulating his faith."

Winning over evangelicals has helped Cruz pass retired Maryland neurosurgeon Ben Carson for second place in South Carolina.

Trailing Cruz in the Winthrop Poll were Carson at 14 percent, U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida at 11 percent and former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush at 9 percent.

The five leading GOP candidates in South Carolina are pulling away from the remaining nine hopefuls, who received 2 percent or less support from Republican voters in the new poll.

Among those nine is U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham of Seneca, the first sitting South Carolina politician to run for president in three decades. Graham also remains near the back of the 14-candidate race for the nomination in other early-primary states, Iowa and New Hampshire.

Some Republican leaders — including Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, a former White House hopeful himself — have suggested candidates with meager poll numbers should drop out of the race so the remain-

Who's leading?

Trump: 24%
Cruz: 16%
Carson: 14%
Rubio: 11%
Bush: 9%
Fiorina, Graham and Huckabee: 2%
Christie, Kasich and Paul: 1%

ing GOP candidates can better battle Trump.

"Winnowing the field might allow the top tier (of candidates) to articulate their vision," Huffmon said. "It's hard to articulate your vision when have to shout over someone else,"

The Winthrop Poll was taken from Nov. 30 through Monday, the day that Trump proposed a temporary ban on Muslims traveling into the United States following ISIS-related

mass shootings.

S.C. Republican leaders criticized Trump for that proposed ban, including Gov. Nikki Haley, who called his proposal "un-American."

But Trump's proposal, which some condemned as unconstitutional, has not hurt him in the Palmetto State as the state's Feb. 20 primary approaches.

On Wednesday, Fox News released a poll showing Trump leading Carson by 35 percent to 15 percent in the Palmetto State. Cruz and Rubio were tied for third at 14 percent. That poll was taken this week, after Trump's proposed Muslim travel ban.

Terrorism now top issue

Terrorism and ISIS are the top issues in the election for S.C. GOP voters by nearly a 2-1 ratio over the





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economy, the next highest response, according to the Winthrop Poll.

The survey found 67 percent of S.C. Republican voters favor surveillance of mosques, and 48 percent back a database of Muslims in the United States. Forty-two percent of S.C. Republicans oppose the database idea.

Those suggestions, mentioned by Trump, drew even more backing from his supporters — 80 percent of whom want mosques monitored and 72 percent support a database.

The GOP race has changed substantially since Winthrop last surveyed S.C. Republicans in April.

Bush was the leader in the April poll, with Cruz and Graham tied for second. Trump did not enter the race until June. He launched his candidacy with controversial comments about Mexican immigrants

— saying some are rapists — and has continued with sharp jabs at his opponents.

But promising to use his experience as a real estate mogul to make sweeping changes, Trump has found steady support among voters who feel alienated and want a political newcomer to lead in Washington, D.C.

“Voters are saying, ‘We’re sick of politicians,’ ” The Citadel’s Buchanan said. “They don’t like politicians or trust politicians, and they see Trump as the authentic outsider.”

The new Winthrop Poll surveyed 828 likely S.C. Republican presidential primary voters from Nov. 30 through Monday. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.4 percentage points.

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Haley says she won't seek direct aid for destroyed crops

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Farmers packed the Statehouse on Monday to beg Gov. Nikki Haley to ask Congress for money to offset their estimated \$376 million in losses from last month's historic flooding.

But the Republican governor is unwavering in her refusal.

Farmers should have federally subsidized crop insurance, and under-insured farmers shouldn't be bailed out, her office said.

Last week, Haley asked the state's congressional delegation for \$140 million to help homeowners, many of whom had no flood insurance. Her letter did not include any direct aid for farmers. Instead, she asked the U.S. Department of Agriculture to expedite insurance payments to farmers.

"The governor does not believe we should treat farmers differently than any other business owner in South Carolina," said her spokeswoman Chaney Adams.

Her stance puts her at odds with GOP Agriculture Commissioner Hugh Weathers and Republican legislators. A Senate panel studying the storm's cost voted unanimously before the farmers' news conference to send Haley a letter urging her to change her mind. At the event, several Republican House members took the podium to

ask her to sign the request.

Even for those with insurance, payments won't come close to covering farmers' costs, Weathers said.

"If every farm in South Carolina had picked the best crop insurance options available, the insurance proceeds still would not cover the basic cost of putting that acre of corn, cotton, soybeans in the ground," Weathers told the Senate panel.

Losses didn't stop with the initial flooding. While the Oct. 2-5 storm that dumped 2 feet of rain on parts of the state did the bulk of the damage, the continued rainfall worsened the problem, as crops rotted in the fields, Weathers said.

The estimated losses include \$330 million worth of crops destroyed or damaged in the field at harvest time and \$46 million in winter crops that can't be planted in the muck, Weathers said.

While Haley's advocacy wouldn't automatically cause Congress to put the money in the federal budget, a request won't be seriously considered without her backing, Weathers said.

"Please request the funds and help save our communities," said fourth-generation farmer Jeremy Cannon of Turbeville, who was among hundreds of farmers who crowded outside

Haley's office. "There is no revenue. We need your help, and we need it fast."

State Farm Bureau President Harry Ott, elected to the job Saturday, said farms are different than other small businesses.

"We spend money 11 months out of the year so we can harvest one month of the year," said Ott, a St. Matthews farmer and the state House's former Democratic leader. "Unfortunately, this year the flood occurred right at harvest season."

Farm loans are coming due Dec. 31, and the banks will start sending out unpaid notices in January, he said.

"Without this federal assistance, there will be family farms foreclosed on, and generational farmers will find themselves with their property sold on the steps of the courthouse," Ott said.

Most of the state's 25,000 farmers were affected, he said.

Like other businesses, farmers can apply for emergency, low-interest loans from the federal government. But they must prove they can't get credit from a bank, while also showing they have the cash flow to pay for a loan. Many farmers already are deep in debt on fields where equipment literally can't "stand up," Weathers said. "It would sink in the mud."