
From: Haley, Nikki
Sent: Wednesday, August 17, 2016 9:58 PM
To: Godfrey, Rob; Adams, Chaney
Subject: Fwd: Afternoon Clips – Wednesday, August 17, 2016

The freedom study needs to be one of our next posts.

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Moore, Camlin" <CamlinMoore@gov.sc.gov>
Date: August 17, 2016 at 4:27:15 PM EDT
Subject: Afternoon Clips – Wednesday, August 17, 2016

Afternoon Clips – Wednesday, August 17, 2016

Governor Nikki Haley News:

The State: SC Republicans criticize Clyburn for road-repair projects

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article96022647.html>

Cassie Cope

S.C. Republicans are criticizing U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn, D-Columbia, for a \$21.5 million list of road-spending projects the longtime congressman is pushing to get approved. The S.C. Department of Transportation has about \$23.5 million in federal money once earmarked for road projects in the congressional district Clyburn represents. Those projects never got off the ground or were completed, freeing up the money for new uses. To qualify, the new project must be within 50 miles of the original project and have a local match of 20 percent of the project budget. Clyburn, who secured most of that money, sent a letter to S.C. Transportation Department chief Christy Hall in July asking that the money be spent on other projects in his district...

NOTE: S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley's office agreed, calling Clyburn's proposal a "perfect example of everything wrong with our roads system and why it so desperately needs reform. The wishes of politicians are more important than the safety of our citizens," said Haley's spokeswoman Chaney Adams. "Under no circumstances should this money be spent on any projects other than those prioritized by the Department of Transportation. Period."

Greenville News: County Council approves resolution to reduce number of mentally ill in jail

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/2016/08/16/county-council-approves-resolution-reduce-number-mentally-ill-jail/88869516/>

Amanda Coyne

Greenville County Council unanimously approved a resolution aimed at reducing the number of mentally ill people in jails Tuesday night. The resolution supports the Stepping Up Initiative, a movement also dedicated to addressing the issue of mental illness behind bars. Paton Blough, a Greenville resident and member of the Stepping Up Initiative, said the resolution will be a tool to hold County Council accountable for improvements in the county's law enforcement and mental healthcare policies. Blough lives with a bipolar disorder and says previous actions, including instituting mental health courts, have helped him and other people with mental illnesses through the criminal justice system to get treatment. "I've been in jail more than half a dozen times and I've been in a mental hospital more than half a dozen times, but I was a lucky one. I went through what is called a mental health court. I was one of the lucky ones," Blough said. "If it wasn't for things like that, that people in this county kept going even when the funding ran out, I would be in jail or dead right now."

NOTE: Blough cited a decline in South Carolina's number of beds in inpatient mental health treatment centers. The state currently has 493 beds in those centers, according to an Aug. 2 PBS report. The state has added 67 beds since Gov. Nikki Haley has been in office, but there were previously as many as 3,500 beds in mental health treatment facilities, Blough said.

SC Political News:

Associated Press: Airports, military museum among losers of \$10M budget cut

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=ymKW5Yi1

Seanna Adcox

South Carolina's chief accountant says a revenue shortfall has cut \$10 million worth of spending from the state's \$7.5 billion budget. State Comptroller Richard Eckstrom says the surplus for the fiscal year that ended June 30 came in \$10.3 million less than the Legislature expected. That means projects toward the bottom of a priority list for one-time spending can't be funded. The state's Aeronautics Commission takes the biggest loss of \$7.5 million. Most of that was intended for maintenance and upgrades at the state's 51 publicly owned airports. Agency director James Stephens said Wednesday the cut means airports may miss out on federal grants that provide 90 percent of a project's costs, benefiting competing airports in other states. Other cuts include \$380,000 to the South Carolina National Guard's museum.

The State: South Carolina has more freedom, study says

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article96211482.html>

Bristow Marchant

South Carolinians have more freedom than the residents of most other states, at least according to one study. The Cato Institute, a libertarian-leaning think tank, has published its rankings of all 50 states according to their freedom levels, whether it's economic restrictions or the freedom to marry, own firearms and consume marijuana. South Carolina ranks 15th on the list, five points higher than in 2012. Cato gives the state high marks for its tax and regulatory policy, and notes the legalization of same-sex marriage has improved the state's rankings on personal freedom. The most free state in the union is New Hampshire, according to the rankings, while its near-neighbor New York is the least free. New York has apparently been taking the least free state title for a while due to its economic policies, including a local tax burden twice the state average. Cato predicts it will remain there for "many years to come."

Post and Courier: Hahanan still going around and around about new intersection near school

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160817/160819474/hahanan-still-going-around-and-around-about-new-intersection-near-school>

Brenda Rindge

Frustrated that school officials haven't approved plans for a roundabout near a planned school, residents are climbing the political ladder in hopes that someone hears their plea. The Hanahan Citizens Committee for New Elementary School will meet at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at Shield of Faith Church. Berkeley County School District officials are not expected to attend, but Committee chair Pat Eckstine said other state and local politicians will. "We asked (the board) for public discussion and a vote about the turn lanes versus the roundabout (at Foster Creek Boulevard and Williams Lane)," said Eckstine. Superintendent Brenda Blackburn has said the board won't revisit the issue until September or October. "That's too long to wait," Eckstine said. "This is having a major impact and will have a major impact on the residents on that side of Hanahan and in Goose Creek." Construction has not yet started on the new \$22 million elementary school on Williams Lane, which is set to open in August 2018.

SC Agency News:

The State: SC tax agency can't sue private companies over penny tax, judge rules

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article96158917.html>

Sarah Ellis

Just because three private companies have a contract to manage Richland County penny tax dollars doesn't mean the state's tax collection agency has authority over them, a judge ruled this week. The S.C. Department of Revenue cannot pursue legal action against the private companies contracted with Richland County to manage the county's \$1 billion transportation penny sales tax program, Judge Thomas Cooper ruled Tuesday. However, the revenue agency may still pursue its claims of corruption and fraud against the county itself, Cooper decided Wednesday. In addition to countersuing the county over its controversial use of the penny tax, the state tax collection agency has pointed fingers at ICA Engineering, M.B. Kahn Construction Co. and Brownstone Construction Group – collectively known as the program development team – alleging fraud and conspiracy to misuse the public's dollars.

Post and Courier: Charleston man suing Pageland group home for wrongful death of brother

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160816/160819558/charleston-man-suing-pageland-group-home-for-wrongful-death-of-brother>

Melissa Boughton

When Michael Farrow died in a group home, his older brother vowed in his obituary to get retribution. One of his caregivers has since been arrested, and a civil lawsuit is pending in Chesterfield County against CHESCO Services, which staffed the group home, and the S.C. Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, which oversees the facility. David Farrow of Charleston filed the wrongful death suit in May. His brother died May 11, 2014, at age 55, and had suffered from mental retardation and severe developmental disabilities, requiring 24-hour care and attention, the suit states. Michael Farrow lived at CHESCO's Community Training Home in Pageland for 12 years. A few days before his death, he had developed an inner thigh wound that CHESCO employees treated with a topical ointment, the lawsuit states. CHESCO, which did not return multiple phone and email messages for comment, and DDSN, which does not comment on pending litigation, have both claimed sovereign immunity.

SC After Recent Violence:

The State: Faith leaders, law enforcement join SC's Scott, Gowdy to discuss race, policing

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article96201007.html>

Jamie Self

Two S.C. congressmen say South Carolinians must have a frank conversation about race and policing in an effort to curb incidents of violence like last summer's slaying of nine African Americans at a Charleston church and shooting of an unarmed black North Charleston man by a white police officer. To drive that discussion, U.S. Sen. Tim Scott, R-North Charleston, and U.S. Rep. Trey Gowdy, R-Spartanburg, invited S.C. faith and law enforcement leaders together Wednesday. About 15 people participated in the private discussion at Brookland Baptist Conference Center with Scott and Gowdy – closed to the press to encourage guests to speak openly and honestly about their experiences, Scott and Gowdy's offices said. In an interview with The State after the meeting, Scott said he and Gowdy came up with the idea over meals in Washington, a place where the two friends and colleagues hash out difficult issues. As a former prosecutor, Gowdy said he comes from a law enforcement background but needs to understand Scott's "perspective as someone who has had interaction with law enforcement that I've never had."

The Herald: 'We're not going to drop it': Concerned Black Men detail next steps seeking police transparency

<http://www.heraldonline.com/news/local/article96086082.html>

David Thackham

The 30-day waiting period is up. The serious discussions have only just begun for Brad Rawlinson. The local Rock Hill attorney spent an hour and a half Tuesday evening explaining and defending a list of 10 demands that he and his activist group gave to the Rock Hill Police Department last month that he hopes will create transparency into police actions. "These are demands for a reason," Rawlinson said during a public forum held at the old Pix Theater on Oakland Avenue. "We're not going to drop it." Rawlinson led a dialogue with around 30 attendees that touched on topics including cameras in patrol vehicles, changes in behavior and enacting change in black communities. He and his group, the Concerned Black Men of Rock Hill, last month marched downtown to the Rock Hill Police Department on July 16 to deliver a list of demands for action within 30 days. The group's leaders have since held meetings with Mayor Doug Echols and police Chief Chris Watts.

Dylann Roof Case:

Associated Press: Judge wants to close hearing on evidence in church shooting
http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=0Gt7SPGC

SC State Wire

A federal judge in South Carolina wants to close a hearing next month to consider a defense request to keep some evidence out of the trial of Dylann Roof in the Charleston church shootings. U.S. District Judge Richard Gergel issued an order Tuesday setting a Sept. 1 hearing. The order says he intends to close the hearing to protect Roof's right to a fair trial. Gergel said making the evidence public before the court can consider whether it may be admitted could interfere with seating an impartial jury. Gergel also agreed to seal proposed questionnaires to screen potential jurors. The 22-year-old Roof faces numerous federal charges in the shooting deaths of nine black parishioners at Emanuel AME Church in June 2015. His death penalty trial is set for November.

South Carolina News:

Associated Press: Tropical depression moving over the central Atlantic

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=jMNI4LAX

SC State Wire

The U.S. National Hurricane Center says a tropical depression moving over the central Atlantic is expected to strengthen to a tropical storm. The depression's maximum sustained winds early Wednesday are near 35 mph (55 kph). Slow strengthening is expected and forecasters say the depression is likely to become a tropical storm later in the day. The depression is centered about 775 miles (1,245 kilometers) west-southwest of the Cabo Verde Islands and is moving northwest near 15 mph (24 kph).

Post and Courier: 22 Lowcountry companies among nation's fastest-growing, according to Inc. magazine
<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160817/160819472/22-lowcountry-companies-among-nations-fastest-growing-according-to-inc-magazine>

Thad Moore

They're small businesses now, but they might not be for long. The Lowcountry landed 22 spots on Inc. magazine's annual list of the 5,000 fastest-growing private companies in America, recognizing local businesses ranging from the growth-focused technology sector to the region's booming construction trade. They did so with sales growth over the past three years that in many cases doubled, tripled or even grew tenfold. Altogether, they brought in sales of more than \$300 million last year — money that wasn't flowing into the area just a few years ago. Top in the region was JEAR Logistics, a freight brokerage firm in Mount Pleasant that posted growth of more than 900 percent since 2012, good enough for No. 4 in South Carolina. The Upstate's Sandlapper Capital Investments, Green Cloud Technologies and 9Round each ranked higher. Even so, the Lowcountry collected an outsize share of the recognition, accounting for about two-fifths of the 56 South Carolina companies on the list. It was boosted by the region's growing tech sector, which is heavy on growth-hungry startups.

Post and Courier: Port of Charleston sets July cargo record
<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160817/160819483/port-of-charleston-sets-july-cargo-record>

David Wren

The State Ports Authority last month set a record for the amount of cargo moving through the Port of Charleston in July with 100,366 containers, a 1.2 percent increase over the previous record set in July 2015. The local increase in containerized cargo comes at a time when most U.S. ports are seeing year-over-year declines. The SPA has set an ambitious goal of increasing cargo by 6 percent during fiscal 2017, which started July 1. That rate is three times higher than what most U.S. ports are expecting and well above the roughly flat levels predicted for ports worldwide. Much of the increase at the Port of Charleston is due to larger ships visiting the facility since the Panama Canal's expansion was completed last month. Shipping lines are replacing vessels that hold 4,500 cargo boxes with those carrying 8,500 or more. That means more cargo will flow through Charleston even though shipping lines are not expected to increase their number of port calls.

Local News:

Associated Press: Former deputy gets year and a day for illegal gun sales
http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentquid=exibqJl1
SC State Wire

A former Berkeley County sheriff's deputy has been sentenced to a year and a day in prison for illegal gun sales. Acting South Carolina United States Attorney Beth Drake says 62-year-old Tony Allen Riley of Goose Creek pleaded guilty and was sentenced in federal court in Charleston on Tuesday. Riley was a deputy in December 2013. Drake says evidence at the hearing showed that he twice sold firearms to a person he knew to be under indictment for a crime punishable by a prison term of more than a year. That's

a violation of federal law. Riley must also serve a year of probation following completion of the prison term.

Post and Courier: Former Berkeley County deputy who sold gun to felon sentenced to federal prison

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160817/160819491/former-berkeley-county-deputy-who-sold-gun-to-felon-sentenced-to-federal-prison>

Gregory Yee

A former Berkeley County sheriff's deputy was sentenced Tuesday to one year and one day in federal prison after he admitted to selling a handgun to a felon. Tony Riley pleaded guilty to the illegal gun sale after his trial ended with a hung jury and in exchange for dismissal of a second count that he sold a Mossberg shotgun to a felon. Riley was working as a courthouse deputy for the Berkeley County Sheriff's Office in late 2013 when he sold a Smith & Wesson .38-caliber revolver to a known felon, according to the indictment. The 62-year-old Goose Creek resident faced up to 10 years in federal prison. Instead, he will serve one year probation at the end of his prison sentence, according to court documents. His attorney, Grover Seaton IV, could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

Sun News: SLED county police investigation stays secret, for now

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/news/local/article96118037.html>

Audrey Hudson

The findings of the S.C. Law Enforcement Division (SLED) investigation of individuals within the Horry County Police Department will not be made public unless the attorney's general office declines to pursue charges, or charges are filed and the resulting court case completed. That's because the investigation is still considered "open," as long as prosecutors might come back to the state agency and request further information, said Thom Berry, SLED spokesman. "We don't consider a case file closed until one of those two things happens," Berry said. "Generally, we don't talk about any investigation including the status while it is underway." Once the case is exhausted, then the findings and potential evidence of crimes committed will be made public. That means the report cannot be used against the police department in the civil lawsuits filed by four women who say that former Detective Allen Large sexually abused or harassed them and coerced them to participate in nude catfight videos.

Associated Press: 22 from 'Irish traveler' community indicted for racketeering

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

SC State Wire

A federal grand jury has indicted 22 people from a so-called Irish traveler community in western South Carolina for racketeering, alleging various violations ranging from food-stamp and tax fraud to money laundering and insurance fraud. Acting South Carolina U.S. Attorney Beth Drake announced that the 48-count indictment alleging the operation of a criminal organization was returned on Tuesday. The indictment says the defendants are residents of a community near North Augusta. It says travelers are itinerant laborers and salesmen who go door to door and speak a dialect of English and Gaelic called "Cant," in addition to American English. It said many of the defendants "reside in Murphy Village where they own large homes, luxury cars and expensive jewelry and clothes which are often acquired through fraud schemes or acquired with the proceeds of fraud schemes."

Aiken Standard: 22 indicted on racketeering, fraud charges emerging from Murphy Village near North Augusta

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/20160816/160819641/22-indicted-on-racketeering-fraud-charges-emerging-from-murphy-village-near-north-augusta>

Maayan Schechter

Twenty-two North Augusta and Augusta residents have been indicted on racketeering and fraud charges stemming from incidents taken place inside Murphy Village near North Augusta. Acting U.S. Attorney Beth Drake announced the indictments Tuesday. According to a statement, all 22 were charged in a 45-count indictment for racketeering and other crimes related to fraudulent schemes. The indictment states the defendants operated out of Murphy Village, near North Augusta, and committed a number of fraudulent schemes in order to obtain life insurance benefits, food stamps, Medicaid funds and fraud involving automobile financing.

Associated Press: Refueling issues cause military jets to change route

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentquid=H5nNy9ao

SC State Wire

A New Hampshire National Guard spokesman says six F-16 fighter jets from South Carolina on their way to Italy have been diverted to the Pease Air National Guard Base in Portsmouth due to refueling issues. Lt. Col Greg Heilshorn tells WMUR-TV (<http://bit.ly/2bo166p>) the jets' refueling tanker encountered mechanical issues, and so the jets were unable to refuel over the ocean. They were diverted to Pease early Wednesday. The jets, which took off from Shaw Air Force Base, will remain in New Hampshire until Friday.

The Herald: Rock Hill company maintains national spot on Inc. 5000 list

<http://www.heraldonline.com/news/local/article96187267.html>

David Thackham

A Rock Hill-based software developer has maintained a high ranking for the second straight year on a list of fastest-growing national entrepreneurs. SPAN Enterprises was ranked No. 2,110 on the 2016 edition of the Inc. 5000 – an annual list of the 5,000 fastest-growing companies released Wednesday by the business magazine Inc. SPAN was first named to the list last year as No. 1,150. The company is rated the 15th-fastest company in the Charlotte region, and No. 21 in South Carolina. To qualify for the list, companies must have grown revenue from a minimum of \$100,000 in 2012 to at least \$2 million in 2015. “We are grateful for the recognition,” SPAN co-founder Agie Sundaram said. “Span couldn’t thrive without all the hard work and innovation from our team members, so – to them – I am most grateful.” SPAN, which employs 28 at its Rock Hill location, is the only company from Rock Hill to make the list. For the second year in a row, it was honored as the fastest-growing software company in the state.

Lake Wylie Pilot: York County losing neighbors and \$21K to North Carolina

<http://www.heraldonline.com/news/local/community/lake-wylie-pilot/article95971532.html>

John Marks

It’s almost time Lake Wylie says goodbye to a few dozen residents. It’s been an eventful couple hundred years, but it’s time to go home. Residents may think it a new state boundary, but experts say it’s only clarified. By either name, the line separating the Carolinas is changing Jan. 1. The South Carolina legislature passed a bill June 2 recognizing the new line. Final plats in York County for properties impacted by the change will be recorded “in the next couple of months,” said tax assessor Rob

Weaver. "The boundary line was originally surveyed in the 1700s," he said. "Several years ago, the boundary line was re-surveyed using modern technology, and several discrepancies were found." A boundary commission notified property owners who would see all or part of their land switch states. Plats are being recorded with county deed registries so they can be mapped and valued.

Presidential Election 2016:

Associated Press: Trump campaign shakes up leadership in latest sign of tumult
<http://bigstory.ap.org/94bdf984030145f9b9ddddd32a4e3450>

Jill Colvin and Julie Pace

Donald Trump announced a shake-up of his campaign leadership Wednesday, the latest sign of tumult for his struggling White House bid less than three months from his Election Day faceoff with Hillary Clinton. The Republican nominee named Stephen Bannon of the conservative Breitbart News website as chief executive officer and promoted pollster Kellyanne Conway to campaign manager. The moves signal that Trump plans to embrace his populist, outsider persona in the campaign's final stretch rather than moderate and extend a hand to more traditional Republicans. "I've known both of them for a long time. They're terrific people, they're winners, they're champs, and we need to win it," Trump told The Associated Press in a phone interview in the early hours of Wednesday morning. Paul Manafort, Trump's controversial campaign chairman, will retain his title. But in announcing the shakeup, Trump said Bannon would now oversee the campaign staff and operations, raising questions about Manafort's role going forward.

Associated Press: AP Sources: Manafort tied to undisclosed foreign lobbying
<http://bigstory.ap.org/c01989a47ee5421593ba1b301ec07813>

Jeff Horwitz and Desmond Butler

Donald Trump's campaign chairman helped a pro-Russian governing party in Ukraine secretly route at least \$2.2 million in payments to two prominent Washington lobbying firms in 2012, and did so in a way that effectively obscured the foreign political party's efforts to influence U.S. policy. The revelation, provided to The Associated Press by people directly knowledgeable about the effort, comes at a time when Trump has faced criticism for his friendly overtures to Russian President Vladimir Putin. It also casts new light on the business practices of campaign chairman Paul Manafort. Under federal law, U.S. lobbyists must declare publicly if they represent foreign leaders or their political parties and provide detailed reports about their actions to the Justice Department. A violation is a felony and can result in up to five years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. Trump shook up his campaign organization Wednesday, putting two new longtime Republican conservative strategists as chief executive officer and campaign manager. It was unclear what impact the shakeup would have on Manafort, but he retains his title as campaign chairman.

Associated Press: Clinton shrugs off Trump shakeup, attacks his tax plan
<http://bigstory.ap.org/09f743f8577c4c74943542d93865506a>

Ken Thomas

Hillary Clinton shrugged off Donald Trump's latest campaign shakeup Wednesday, saying he's the "same man" who would cut taxes for rich people while she would force the super-wealthy to pay more. "Donald Trump doesn't need a tax cut. I don't need a tax

cut. It's time for the wealthiest Americans, whoever you are, as well as corporations and Wall Street to pay your fair share in taxes," Clinton said at a rally with more than 2,300 people at Cleveland's John Marshall High School. Her remarks came shortly after Trump, struggling to steady his troubled campaign, announced a new chief executive officer and campaign manager. Polls show Clinton building a lead in the weeks since the summer nominating conventions. At the rally, Clinton suggested staffing changes won't fix her rival's campaign or change his past insults of the Muslim American parents of an Army Captain killed in Iraq, or incendiary comments about women and people with disabilities.

Associated Press: The Latest: Trump, advisers discuss combatting terrorism

<http://bigstory.ap.org/4a1b752bc0134ee7b77c36f3c8fa76cf>

Donald Trump and his top advisers — old and new — are meeting in at Trump Tower in New York. They say they are discussing tactics to defeat "radical Islamic terrorism." The roundtable at Trump Tower in New York is being attended by former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama, former Attorney General Michael Mukasey, and more than a dozen others. Also present are Trump's new campaign CEO, Stephen Bannon, and newly promoted campaign manager Kellyanne Conway. She was sitting next to campaign chair Paul Manafort at one end of the table. The meeting comes hours after Trump announced Bannon and Conway's appointments in a shake-up of campaign staff.

National News:

Associated Press: As floodwaters recede, disbelief mixes with determination

<http://bigstory.ap.org/ed9ead5dea5d492c91f53777bf3b4841>

Michael Kunzelman, Melinda Deslatte and Kevin McGill

The smell of muddy water hung heavy in the air as people began sorting through waterlogged belongings and ripping out carpets Wednesday in flood-wracked southern Louisiana, which now faces a long-term challenge of how to house thousands of displaced people. Even as the water receded in some areas, it was rising in other communities downstream, sending people fleeing to shelters. Officials painted a stark picture of the crisis: at least 40,000 homes damaged and 11 people killed in some of the worst flooding in Louisiana history. More than 30,000 people have been rescued since Friday. More than 110 state highways remained closed Wednesday, along with even more local roadways.

Associated Press: Newest wildfire advances on thousands of California homes

<http://bigstory.ap.org/447a24fd39094cf78ff2a784d72f8a2f>

Christopher Weber and Christine Armario

California's newest huge wildfire advanced on thousands of homes Wednesday, feeding on drought-stricken vegetation and destroying an untold number of structures as it expanded to nearly 47 square miles. Authorities could not say how many homes were destroyed in the first furious hours, but they prepared communities for bad news. "There will be a lot of families that come home to nothing," San Bernardino County Fire Chief Mark Hartwig said after a morning flight over a scene he described as "devastating." "It hit hard. It hit fast. It hit with an intensity that we hadn't seen before," he said. No deaths were reported but cadaver dogs were used to search ruins to look for anyone who was overrun by the flames. The blaze 60 miles east of Los Angeles was among eight large

wildfires being battled by 10,000 firefighters statewide, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. In a fifth year of low rainfall, much of the area is in "extreme" or "exceptional" drought.

World News:

Associated Press: Iran acknowledges Russia using its air base to strike Syria
<http://bigstory.ap.org/d697e7c77e3f412cad0e3a839f910be5>

Ziena Karam and Jon Gambrell

In a move that could reverberate across the Middle East, Iran confirmed Wednesday that Russia is using its territory to launch airstrikes in Syria even as a second wave of Moscow's bombers flew out of the Islamic Republic to hit targets in the war-ravaged country. The development, which the United States says could violate U.N. resolutions targeting Tehran, represents a historical rapprochement with Russia that could rile U.S.-allied Gulf neighbors, strengthen Syrian President Bashar Assad and impact the war against the Islamic State group. Russia first announced the strikes on Tuesday from near the Iranian city of Hamedan, 280 kilometers (175 miles) southwest of the Iranian capital, Tehran. On Wednesday, Russia's Defense Ministry said another wave of bombers had departed from Iran, striking targets in eastern Syria.

Associated Press: Father: Lochte back in US; Rio judge orders passports held
<http://bigstory.ap.org/a5a3d602b02e4695a6271e07aead0d72>

Mauricio Savarese and Beth Harris

The father of American swimmer Ryan Lochte said Wednesday his gold medal-winning son arrived back in the United States before a Brazilian judge ordered that Lochte and U.S. teammate Jimmy Feigen stay in Brazil as authorities investigate their claim they were robbed during the Olympics. Steve Lochte told The Associated Press by phone from his Florida home that his son called him Tuesday after arriving in the United States. The 32-year-old swimmer was going to pick up his car and buy a new wallet to replace the one that he said was stolen in the robbery. "I'm just happy he's safe," the elder Lochte said. "It was an unfortunate experience for him and the other three. I don't know what all the controversy is. They were basically taken out of the taxi and robbed. The main thing is he's very lucky that he's safe and that all they got was his cash and wallet." The elder Lochte said his son's Olympic credential and cell phone weren't taken during the incident early Sunday morning. He said he was sure Ryan had his passport or he would not have been allowed to board a plane.

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