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Date: 11/19/2015 10:38:27 AM

Subject: FYSA-11/19/15 Media Monitoring Report for DR-4241 SC

Attachments: 111915 MM Report for DR-4242-SC.DOCX

NEWS CLIPS

SOUTH CAROLINA-DR-4241

11/19/15

Issues:

- The State has a video of a former Marine turned down by FEMA because she has insurance, but her insurance company only gave her enough to replace a few shingles on her roof and a fence. Home inspectors came to her home and told her it had to be demolished because of mold.
- There is local street flooding early this morning in the Columbia area, according to live reports on WLTX.

Summary:

- Several news outlets have used the FEMA news releases about the registration deadline being 2 weeks away and the Conway and Andrews DRCs closing
- The State has a video of Marine veterans who was denied by FEMA because of insurance, while insurance company awarded her very little in payments and her house is now condemned due to mold.
- The leader of the environmental agency that regulates dams said that high hazard dams that could cause loss of life downstream if they broke should be inspected by the agency annually. The standard has been every 2 years.
- Columbia city repairs will cost about \$130 million
- Farmers' losses are now approaching \$600 million and many are now in crisis, according to testimony at legislative committee that is gathering flood damage estimates. They have no cash flow, so they can't take on more debt through disaster loans, lawmakers were told. Very heavy coverage in the past day of the ag industry situation due to the flood.
- As final debris pick-up is set, some residents confused because theirs isn't getting taken away.
- WIS report: With October's floods a month and half in our rear view, some of the displaced say they're still struggling to find affordable temporary housing.
- Some neighborhoods still inaccessible as road and bridge repairs continue.
- BMW plant's deliveries, to Charleston port still hampered by Broad River railroad trestle being out between Greenville and Columbia
- Charitable drives for flood survivors continue, including one church's "House In A Box."

Analysis:

- The closing of DRCs and the two-week deadline for registering with FEMA got widespread coverage in the past 24 hours, but the topic that has the heaviest coverage in the past day's news reports is the crisis faced by farmers around the state. The price tag on Columbia city infrastructure repairs also generated a lot of coverage.

Floods

Flood survivors have 2 weeks to apply for FEMA assistance

SC Flood Victims Have Two Weeks Left To Apply For FEMA Help

SC Flood survivors Have Two Weeks to Apply for FEMA Assistance

Flood recovery centers in Andrews and Conway to close

Andrews, Conway disaster recovery centers to close

Disaster recovery center relocates to Summerville

VIDEO: Former Marine And Her Family Still Homeless After Flood

No Severe Weather, But Plenty of Rain

Midlands waking up to rain Thursday

SCDOT to start last week of debris pickup in four counties

Johnsonville residents confused about flood debris removal, SCDOT says work is underway

Project list for repairs in Columbia estimated to cost up to \$130 million

Cost To Repair Columbia Canal: \$100 Million

City Council Votes On Spending For Flood Damage In Columbia

Officials: Price tag set at \$100 million to fix Columbia Canal

Columbia City Council Approves Flood Repairs

DHEC leader says dams should be inspected more often
DHEC director: South Carolina must inspect dams more often
Lawmakers question DHEC director on dams, mosquito issues
Flood victims tout need for temporary housing
A month post-flood and some neighborhoods are still inaccessible
Agriculture Industry Reports Early Losses
South Carolina agriculture losses double from flood
South Carolina officials say estimated agricultural losses from last month's floods doubled
South Carolina farmers hope for a lifeline as flood losses pile up
EDITORIAL: S.C. farmers rate state help
What about our farmers - Historic flood destroys crops (w/video)
Are we close to record rainfall for November?
Tecklenburg is Charleston's new mayor
'Project Jacket,' \$1.75M bond approved at special meeting
Saluda Shoals Park up and operating for holiday lights show
Rail update
South Carolina fund established to help flooding victims
Improvements coming soon for Lost Road Creek Bridge
S.C. home sales down 5.5% in October
DHEC to reopen some shellfish harvesting areas in Charleston County
South Carolina frustrated by mosquitos, standing water, future costs
Housing starts fall to lowest level since the spring after storms, flooding
Local Church to Provide a "House in a Box" for Flood Victims
Oliver Gospel Comes Up Short Hundreds of Donations
Officials say clear leaves from ditches, storm drains to help prevent flooding
Midlands waking up to rain Thursday
Need another excuse to buy rare bourbon? How about a whiskey auction to help flood relief?
Williams Middle School students collect money for flood victims
Students collecting food for needy
New York family aids Andrews flood victims
Scoppe: The link between state revenue projections and politicians' plans is ... missing
Letter: Thanks for all the information during the 'Great Flood'
TV/Radio Clips

Floods

Flood survivors have 2 weeks to apply for FEMA assistance

Special to The T&D

[Times and Democrat](#), Orangeburg, Nov. 19, 2015

COLUMBIA -- Two weeks remain for survivors of the Oct. 1-23 storms and flooding in South Carolina to register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and submit loan applications to the U.S. Small Business Administration.

The registration deadline is Friday, Dec. 4. Once registered, an individual is in the system, and there is no need for them to register again.

Assistance can include money for temporary housing and essential home repairs for primary homes, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses and other programs to help survivors recover from the effects of the disaster.

There are several ways to register for federal assistance. Individuals can register online at DisasterAssistance.gov or by calling toll-free at 800-621-3362 from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. Multilingual operators are available. Survivors may also get assistance from a Disaster Survivor Assistance team member working in their communities.

Although it is not necessary to visit a disaster recovery center in the 24 disaster-designated counties, some survivors may want to visit a center where they can have access to FEMA program specialists and other federal representatives. For the 29 center locations currently open, visit: <http://asd.fema.gov/inter/locator/home.htm>.

Survivors who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability and use a TTY may call 800-462-7585.

Survivors who use 711 or Video Relay Service or require accommodations while visiting a center may call 800-621-3362.

The SBA deadline for homeowners, renters and businesses to submit loan applications for physical damage is also Dec. 4. Survivors may obtain information by visiting the SBA website www.sba.gov/disaster; applying online via SBA's secure website <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>; or calling SBA's disaster assistance Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955.

At the disaster recovery centers, SBA customer service representatives can answer questions, help complete loan applications and close loans. The SBA also operates business recovery centers in Charleston, Horry, Richland and Sumter counties.

For more information on South Carolina's disaster recovery, visit www.fema.gov/disaster/4241, twitter.com/FEMARegion4, www.facebook.com/FEMA and www.fema.gov/blog.

SC Flood Victims Have Two Weeks Left To Apply For FEMA Help

By Jeremy Turnage

[WIS-TV Columbia \(SC\)](#), November 19, 2015

COLUMBIA, SC (WIS) –

FEMA officials say time is almost up for South Carolinians looking for assistance after last month's destructive floods left many homes under water.

Emergency officials have given a hard deadline of Friday, Dec. 4 for those affected by the floods to apply for federal assistance.

Assistance, according to FEMA, includes money for temporary housing and essential home repairs for primary homes, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses, and other programs to help survivors recover from the effects of the disaster.

Those still looking to apply for assistance can start on FEMA's website or call 1-800-621-3362.

SC Flood survivors Have Two Weeks to Apply for FEMA Assistance

News Release

Flood recovery centers in Andrews and Conway to close

[WCBD News2 NBC Charleston](#), November 18, 2015

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Flood recovery centers in Andrews and Conway to close

By Shawn Cabbagestalk

[WCDB News 2, Charleston NBC](#), November 18, 2015

COLUMBIA, S.C. – Two disaster recovery centers will close Saturday, Nov. 21 at 7 p.m. due to a lack of visitors:

- Potato Bed Ferry Community Center at 531 Big Dam Swamp Drive in Andrews

•Horry County Government and Justice Center at 1301 Second Ave. in Conway

Applicants in Andrews and Conway may still visit other recovery centers to ask disaster assistance questions. They can locate their closest center by visiting asd.fema.gov/inter/locator/home.htm.

Representatives from the South Carolina Emergency Management Division, Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Small Business Administration and other agencies are at centers to answer questions about disaster assistance and low-interest loans.

Applicants also can get help by calling 800-621-3362 or TTY 800-462-7585; those who use 711/VRS can call 800-621-3362. Lines are open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week until further notice.

Andrews, Conway disaster recovery centers to close

[Florence Morning News/SCNow.com](#), Wednesday, November 18, 2015

FEMA RELEASE

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Disaster recovery center relocates to Summerville

[Summerville Journal Scene](#), November 18, 2015

A disaster recovery center in Berkeley County is moving to town.

A center for flood victim assistance previously operated at the Berkeley County Magistrate's Office in Goose Creek. It temporarily closed Thursday due to a severe weather threat but is scheduled to re-open 8 a.m. Friday at a new Summerville location.

The new site, Pine Ridge Fire Department, is located at 565 Myers Road.

VIDEO: Former Marine And Her Family Still Homeless After Flood

By Matt Walsh

[Columbia \(SC\) State](#), November 19, 2015

Manndy McKenney is a veteran of both the Army and Marines, and her home was destroyed during the October rainstorm because her roof could not sustain the more than 20-inches of rain that flooded South Carolina. Manndy and her four children are now homeless. FEMA would not provide her with aid because she has insurance, but her insurance company only gave her enough money to replace a few shingles on her roof and a fence in the backyard. Home inspectors came to her home and told her it had to be demolished because of mold that grew in the wake of the storm.

No Severe Weather, But Plenty of Rain

Jim Gandy

[WLTX 19, Columbia CBS](#), November 19, 2015

Columbia, SC (WLTX) - A line of thunderstorms moved through Georgia Wednesday evening and brought with it the threat of severe weather. A Tornado Watch was issued for parts of western South Carolina into the early morning hours of Thursday. Bands of rain moved through the Midlands, but no severe weather was observed.

Occasional rain fell overnight and there were some gusty winds. Rainfall as of midnight Thursday was generally 0.5 to 1 inch across the Columbia area. There were still some areas of the Midlands that had not seen any rain. The line of storms that produced severe weather in Georgia moved into South Carolina after midnight. This was likely to produce up to an additional inch of rain before ending Thursday morning.

A cold front will pass through the Midlands Thursday afternoon. All of the rain will be over by then and it will be a warm day. However, cooler air will be pushing into the Midlands into the weekend.

Midlands waking up to rain Thursday

By Von Gaskin

[WIS TV NBC Columbia](#), Nov 19, 2015

COLUMBIA, SC (WIS) - A strong cold front bringing severe weather to parts of the southeast is dumping rain on the Midlands Thursday morning.

Despite the heavy rain that fell and left puddles throughout the area Thursday morning, Main and Whaley, which

usually floods during rain, was passable as of 4:30 a.m.

But standing water and puddles have been reported on some roads, so drivers should use caution.

Tornado watches were issued for several counties Wednesday night but they expired without incident. A tornado touched down in the Atlanta area, according to the National Weather Service.

Tim Miller with the WIS First Alert Team says there's a 90% chance of rain in the Midlands through 7 a.m. Thursday.

"Look for all showers and rain to move out by noon with clearing skies," Miller said.

The greatest threat with any storms that develop will be lightning and gusty winds although an isolated tornado cannot be ruled out. Some downpours fell overnight.

The rain totals from this system will vary across the state. The Upstate could see 2 to 4 inches and there is a flash flood watch for that area until Thursday morning. In the central Midlands, expect between a half-inch to an inch and a half. In the Southern and Eastern Midlands, expect a half-inch to 2 inches.

SCDOT to start last week of debris pickup in four counties

By Suzelle Santos

[WCSC, Charleston CBS](#), Nov. 18, 2015

Also at [WPDE, ABC Florence-Myrtle Beach](#)

COLUMBIA, SC (WCSC) - Contractors with the South Carolina Department of Transportation will start their last week of flood-related debris pickup for four counties starting on Monday, Nov. 30.

They're set to pick up debris in the following counties:

- Georgetown County
- Horry County
- Orangeburg County
- Florence County

Contractors are collecting debris by category, so not all debris may be taken away at one time. Click [here](#) for an illustration on how to separate your debris.

The contractors plan to make return trips to gather the categorized items.

Johnsonville residents confused about flood debris removal, SCDOT says work is underway

By Jamarlo Phillips

[WBTW Myrtle Beach CBS](#), November 18, 2015

JOHNSONVILLE, SC (WBTW) – Six weeks after the floods, a lot of people who live along the Lynches River still have a lot of debris in front of their homes.

Residents who live along First Neck Road in Johnsonville have been waiting for someone to come and pick up the debris that sits in their driveway for nearly a month.

"We were told to put it out and somebody would come by and get it, but I haven't seen nobody yet," said Johnsonville resident Danny Sisk.

Insulation, flooring, and even furniture have been sitting in front yards since last month's flood.

Danny Sisk decided he's not going to wait anymore, so he started burning the debris in his backyard Wednesday afternoon.

"For me I can't take care of the whole neighborhood, but I can get rid of mine little by little," Sisk said.

Christine Howell lives on First Neck Road too. She says there is no place for her to take the insulation.

"There are certain things they won't take at the dump in Johnsonville. A lot of people don't even have trailers to haul it with," mentioned Howell.

Since First Neck Road in Johnsonville is maintained by the state News 13 reached out to the South Carolina Department of Transportation for answers regarding debris pickup.

"BTS, who is the contractor working in Williamsburg County, they're going to be on First Neck Road tomorrow to pick up that debris. We told people to pile it up on the right away in the different piles and then the contractors have these big trucks and their picking that debris up from the right away and putting it in their trucks and hauling it off that way," said Assistant District Maintenance Engineer Lorena Pate.

It's something residents say will help folks in the community heal.

"You might feel okay but when you come by and see all of this, then it puts you down in the dumps again. When I say that I mean it gives you a flashback and we would feel better," said Howell.

The South Carolina Department of Transportation is wrapping up debris pickup across the state. They will begin the final stage in Horry, Georgetown and Florence Counties on Monday, November 30th, 2015.

Project list for repairs in Columbia estimated to cost up to \$130 million

By Allie Spillyards

[WIS TV 10 NBC](#) Columbia, Nov 19, 2015

COLUMBIA, SC (WIS) -

Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin and City Manager Teresa Wilson met with lawmakers on Wednesday to share their current project list for flood repairs.

The list has an initial estimate of \$75 million, but the long term estimated cost caused by the floods reaches more \$130 million.

The Columbia Canal made up most of that cost with as much as \$50 million needed for repairs. Emergency protective measures and sewer repairs totaled \$21 million.

Even though FEMA has already committed to help the city pay for three-quarters of the requested repairs, there are still many unanswered questions.

"We have a lot of residents that are asking, 'Are you going to buy out our home?' Wilson said. "And we really can't answer that until we get answers at the state and federal level. So that would be another level where we look for guidance."

Wilson also pointed out some other big takeaways to address before another emergency strikes include plans for sheltering the displaced and spraying for mosquitoes, which became a huge problem weeks after the flooding occurred.

Cost To Repair Columbia Canal: \$100 Million

By Clif LeBlanc

[Columbia \(SC\) State](#), November 19, 2015

Columbia is facing the prospect of having to dip into its reserves or seek short-term loans to help pay for \$132.5 million in flood damage, most of it to the Columbia Canal.

City manager Teresa Wilson disclosed Wednesday, for the first time, that repairs to the breached and weakened canal are likely to cost \$100 million – most of which city officials expect to be covered by federal money.

"We've been told the canal mitigation is the largest in the state," Wilson said of damage reports that Columbia officials have received from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and state flood-recovery authorities.

So far, Columbia has paid \$10 million out of its own pocket to fix the canal, the primary water source for the downtown treatment plant that supplies water to about 188,000 customers. The city has asked FEMA to pay the entire canal bill, Wilson said.

FEMA has said it will pay at least 75 percent of most flood-damage costs. If it sticks to that figure, that could leave the city with a \$25 million bill just for the canal, Mayor Steve Benjamin said.

Asked if such a big bill would lead to higher water or sewer rates — beyond the nearly 10 percent increase that took effect in July — Benjamin said, "I'm not going to support any (flood-caused) rate increases."

The city's next largest flood-repair project, Wilson said in a report delivered to a S.C. House budget-writing committee, is at least \$10 million to fix Columbia's already deteriorated sewer system.

Separately, the city still faces a 10-year, \$750 million tab for court-ordered repairs to the sewer system.

Chief financial officer Jeff Palen said there are three options for paying costs that neither the state nor Washington will cover:

Tap any savings left over from a projected \$120 million in water and sewer projects already budgeted or under construction.

Get short-term loans that would cover repair costs as they arise.

Draw the money from the \$100 million in reserves that the city holds in water and sewer accounts. The city already has taken \$10 million from those accounts to pay for initial repairs to the canal and water-treatment plant, Palen said.

Wilson doesn't like the idea of drawing down the reserves because that could hurt the city's credit rating. "It's not advisable," she said. "We wouldn't want to resort to that."

City Council, ultimately, will have to settle on a funding option or a combination of them, but that won't happen until city staff have a better idea of how much of the overall tab the state, FEMA and other federal agencies might pick up, Wilson and Palen said. That determination is expected by the end of March after City Hall hires a team of consultants to evaluate projects and guide the city's decisions, she said.

The plan at this point is to strengthen the canal, not to replace its three-mile levee with a new one, Wilson said. But city staff want the upgraded canal to be able to withstand future floods, she said.

A 60-foot hole in the canal's dike has been plugged, but permanent repairs likely won't begin until the spring or summer, said Joey Jaco, Columbia's director of utilities. A temporary boulder dam across the 125-foot canal has created a reservoir to feed the water-treatment plant until the dike and canal are restored.

Completely repairing the canal's breach could take at least 12 months, assistant city manager Missy Gentry said.

In addition to the \$132 million in flood damage, Wilson is resisting cutbacks to the city's plans to spend the \$120 million for the next five years to upgrade its water and sewer systems.

"We have no intention of pulling back on those numbers," she said.

With barely a four-member quorum, Columbia City Council on Wednesday:

Approved a total of about \$7 million to pay private contractors for repairs on the Columbia Canal and the downtown water-treatment plant.

Finalized changes in city laws that will suspend building permit fees for six months for repairs to properties where flood damage has been verified. It also suspended for 90 days business license fees for contractors doing flood repairs.

Delayed a final vote on a controversial proposal to remove a requirement that property improvements made during the past five years be calculated in determining how much of rebuilt structures would have to meet newer, tougher building codes.

Finalized a law that allows council members to participate in council meetings even if they are not physically present.

Took formal action with three members of council absent: Councilmen Moe Baddourah, Cameron Runyan and Councilwoman Leona Plough. In one vote on private contractors, three members made the decision to pay because outgoing Councilman Brian DeQuincey Newman has worked with one of the companies and had a conflict of interest. There was no official explanation provided for why the three absent members did not attend the meeting.

City Council Votes On Spending For Flood Damage In Columbia

By Jack Kuenzie

[WIS-TV Columbia \(SC\)](#), November 19, 2015

COLUMBIA, SC (WIS) –

The process of paying for October's devastating flood damage is now underway in Columbia.

With three members missing, four city council members voted to pay some of the contractors involved in carry out stopgap measures at the Columbia Canal.

The quorum of council acted on roughly \$7 million of spending, but that's just a fraction of the costs involved. The Columbia Canal alone, according to a presentation by city officials on Wednesday before the House Ways and Means Committee, will need \$40 to \$50 million in work to bring it back to its previous condition.

However, the federal government would want more than a return to the way things were. Therefore, additional costs to bolster the canal could double the spending required up to \$100 million. That does not include about \$10 million in emergency repairs.

According to Mayor Steve Benjamin, cover the majority of those costs is something FEMA and the government owe the people of Columbia.

"It will total into the tens of millions of dollars," Benjamin said. "People directly affected by this flood need to rebuild their homes, they need to rebuild their businesses. They've given up their time, their talents and their treasures and taxes to the United States government for decades to help those who suffered from Katrina, Superstorm Sandy or what have you. The request that we send to Washington DC needs to recognize the fact that we need help, we need significant help."

The City of Columbia and other municipalities are looking for additional financial assistance from state government, which does not have a significant revenue surplus.

Benjamin and other council members, however, will not be proposing any new increases in water and sewer rates to cover the flood costs.

Officials: Price tag set at \$100 million to fix Columbia Canal

By Tara Petitt

[WACH Fox 57 Columbia](#), November 18th 2015

COLUMBIA, SC (WACH) -- Columbia leaders gave the green light to millions of dollars to help rebuild after last month's flooding. In an emergency meeting Wednesday, Capital City leaders stared down major costs tied to October's flooding.

Hundreds of homes and sixty businesses were impacted when dams broke in Columbia, and the more than 100 year old Columbia Canal took perhaps the biggest hit. More than a month later, leaders are not only looking to fix things, but upgrade to 21st century standards.

Almost \$7 million dollars was approved Wednesday to get to work on Columbia's canal. Among other projects discussed during Wednesday's emergency meeting, the canal will likely be the most pricey, and the city will have to pick up some of the tab.

The most recent estimate for Columbia Canal repairs is \$40 million, but that number is only to restore the canal to

its previous condition.

The city estimates spending about \$100 million total on the canal to reinforce the levee and build a permanent pumping system to pull water from nearby rivers.

"We're talking about building a much more resilient banner, getting the best engineering minds, working and making sure that service to the hundreds and thousands of people and businesses who rely on the safety and sanctity of that water source that it's not impaired, respectively, even if we see another thousand year flood," said Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin.

Typically, FEMA will pay 75 percent of the bill, but that still leaves 25-percent for the city of Columbia to pay-amounting to \$25 million for the canal project.

Columbia council members say they will be asking the federal government to pay for the entire project, but without that, it leaves the potential for Columbia water and sewer customers' rates to increase in order to cover the costs.

Mayor Steve Benjamin says the federal government has helped before in special circumstances like Hurricane Katrina and Super Storm Sandy in the past so he hopes they come through for Columbia.

"Our folks have, again, year after year, supported the recovery of storm after storm all across this country, and I think it's only fair that we ask for reciprocity when it comes to the needs of the people of Columbia."

If Columbia doesn't get help from the government, the expense could affect the city's credit rating if reserves are significantly impacted.

Mayor Benjamin says the city will be putting out their budget numbers from 2014-2015 in a few weeks, and they are expecting between two and three million dollars in surplus money, but that won't discourage council from asking FEMA for 100 percent assistance.

Columbia City Council Approves Flood Repairs

Columbia approves flood repair, it will be the single largest project in the state.

By Charles Ringwalt

[WLTX 19, Columbia CBS](#), November 18, 2015

Columbia, SC (WLTX) - Columbia City Council approved the funding necessary for repairs to the damage caused by the flood.

"It's time for us to make sure that a 21st century city has 21st century infrastructure," said Mayor Steve Benjamin.

The projects will repair the waterline along Caughman Road, the emergency water connection to West Columbia, the Lost Creek Road Bridge and the damage along the Riverbanks Zoo, but the most expansive and expensive project will be rebuilding the Columbia Canal.

"It provides water for all of downtown Columbia, all of southeast Columbia, all of our hospitals. It's a big deal," Benjamin said.

The estimated cost of all of these projects is roughly of \$140 million.

"We're doing everything we can to prepare for any other incredible weather event in the future. (It) will be the single largest project in the state," he said.

The price tags for these projects as well as the contractors were chosen through the city's bidding process. The city will front the money and hopes to be reimbursed by FEMA.

"We're going to ask for 100 percent reimbursement from FEMA. Typically it's a 75 percent reimbursement and the local government is required to do a 25 percent match," he said.

And Councilwoman Tameika Isaac Devine says that City of Columbia Water customers will not be forced to foot that bill.

"The money will actually come out of whatever departments they are in, so most of them are canal works, so it will come from water and sewer. Some of the road works, that will come out of our public works. As far as in response to the flood, there shouldn't be any impact or there will not be any impact on our customers."

If the city is only reimbursed 75 percent, the remaining 25 percent will still come from the water and sewer reserve fund and the storm water fund.

DHEC leader says dams should be inspected more often

By Cassie Cope

[The State \(Columbia\)](#), Nov. 18, 2015

High hazard dams should be inspected annually, DHEC director Catherine Heigel tells panel

Those dams are supposed to be inspected every two years now, she said

Agency working on legislation to improve dam safety regulation

COLUMBIA, SC -- The leader of the environmental agency that regulates dams said that high hazard dams that could cause loss of life downstream if they broke should be inspected by the agency annually.

"We need to lay eyes on those C1 dams every year," said Catherine Heigel, director of the Department of Health and Environmental Control.

Currently those dams are supposed to be inspected every two years, she told a panel of House members tasked with deciding how to pay for damage caused by the historic flooding last month.

The next classifications of significant hazard dams are supposed to be inspected every three years, Heigel said.

Heigel said the agency is the appropriate one to regulate dams, saying the agency has the right skill set but not the right staffing.

The agency is working with legislative staff to propose legislation that would improve the existing dam safety program and make it clear what a dam owner's responsibilities are, she said.

Those suggestions would include making it clearer what dam owners are required to do. For example, requiring owners of high hazard dams to provide an annual assessment of their dams, she said. It could also establish a certain frequency that dam owners must provide the state with an engineering report about the dam, Heigel said.

DHEC director: South Carolina must inspect dams more often

By Cassie Cope

[Rock Hill Herald](#), Nov. 18, 2015

Highlights

Most dangerous dams should be inspected each year, state regulator tells legislators

Regulations now say high-hazard dams should be inspected every two years

Three dams that failed last month were overdue for inspections

COLUMBIA, SC --High-hazard dams that could cost South Carolinians their lives if they break should be inspected every year, the head of the state agency that regulates those dams told legislators Wednesday.

"We need to lay eyes on those C1 dams every year," said Catherine Heigel, director of the state Department of Health and Environmental Control.

C1 dams are high-hazard dams, usually found in populated areas, where a failure could lead to the loss of lives.

Heigel also said the state needs to re-evaluate whether some dams – now thought to be less dangerous – should be reclassified as more dangerous, high-hazard dams.

Currently, state regulations call for C1 dams to be inspected every two years, Heigel told a panel of House members tasked with deciding how to pay for damage caused by last month's historic flooding.

Seven C1 dams failed in Lexington and Richland counties early last month. In three cases, the failed dam's inspection was from eight months to more than two years overdue, according to S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control records.

DHEC head Heigel said her agency is the appropriate one to regulate dams, adding the agency has the right skills to do the job but not enough staffing.

That agency now proposes to bolster its beleaguered dam-safety program, adding money to hire more staff after last month's floods reignited concerns about the inspection program's effectiveness.

In its budget request for next year, DHEC asks to roughly double the size of its dam-safety staff.

If approved, that program would be as large, if not larger, than it has been during the past 20 years. The proposal includes hiring six full-time engineers and an environmental health manager. The agency now has 6.75 dam-safety employees.

State Rep. Murrell Smith, R-Sumter, whose budget subcommittee will hear first DHEC's request for more money, said the dam-inspection program will have to be beefed up.

"We've learned some very hard lessons from this latest storm," Smith said. "The more inspections that we have, probably the better off we are – as long as they don't become a burden (to) owners of the dam."

'Out in the middle of nowhere'

DHEC is charged with inspecting and overseeing 2,370 dams across the state. But, in recent years, inspectors haven't always examined the dams as frequently as required. Without those inspections, the state doesn't always know about shaky dams that threaten property downstream.

DHEC is working with legislative staff to propose legislation that would improve the existing dam-safety program and make clear a dam owner's responsibilities, Heigel said.

For example, owners of high-hazard dams could be required to provide the state with an annual assessment of their dams, she said. The state also could require dam owners provide it with regular engineering reports about their dams, Heigel said.

Some dams also might need to be reclassified as more dangerous, moving them into C1 status, Heigel said.

Populations have grown around many S.C. lakes since their dams were first built, Heigel said. "In fact, most of these were out in the middle of nowhere at the time."

In addition, many of the dams that failed were built before the state started regulating dams and were not built to today's design standards, she said. Some did not include spill ways or the ability to lower lake levels, she said.

How high new design standards should be remains to be seen, said state Rep. Kenny Bingham, R-Lexington, a civil engineer.

Roads, bridges and dams all are designed to withstand certain use. If an event exceeds those design limitations, the infrastructure will fail, he said.

Should dams be built to handle "Noah's flood?" Bingham asked, rhetorically.

Raising design standards could result in construction costs doubling, tripling or quadrupling to protect against a rare event that might never happen, he said.

'I don't sleep well'

More than a month after the flooding, Heigel said her agency still is responding to calls about the safety of dams.

For instance, forecasts predict at least 2 inches of rain could fall in the Upstate by late Thursday.

"Every time I hear that kind of rain projection, I don't sleep well," Heigel said.

Lawmakers question DHEC director on dams, mosquito issues

By Will Whitson

[WIS TV 10 NBC Columbia](#), Nov 19, 2015

COLUMBIA, SC (WIS) - DHEC Director Catherine Heigel told lawmakers Wednesday that many of the dams that breached or overflowed were built well before there were housing developments, neighborhood, and communities in those areas.

Many lawmakers wanted to know why dam failures were such an issue during the floods and if anything could've been done sooner.

Heigel pointed out that water levels were only one part of the problem. She told lawmakers that the communities built around the dams created a dangerous situation when the flood hit.

Still, lawmakers wondered who was responsible for maintaining safe dams.

"Those who built where there's a flood plain or just downstream from the river contributed to the problem," Rep. Dwight Loftis said. "I understand what you're saying, but to put that back and point a finger at a dam owner who has not been negligent is a little overburdensome."

Lawmakers also questioned Heigel on mosquito control, an issue that has been brought up often at these hearings.

Lawmakers have expressed a lot of frustration, saying counties don't have the resources to combat the mosquito problem that grew out of October's flood.

Flood victims tout need for temporary housing

By Allie Spillyards

[WIS TV 10, NBC Columbia](#), Nov. 18, 2015

COLUMBIA, SC (WIS) - With October's floods a month and half in our rear view, some of the displaced say they're still struggling to find affordable temporary housing.

Dozens flooded into local hotels in the days following floods. But as insurance and emergency aid funds dry up, there are many searching for more affordable alternatives.

Kandi Freeman lost her rental home and all of her belongings.

She said she thought she'd be homeless shelter bound before friends offered up a couch, and then volunteers from Columbia Metro Baptist Association helped her find a lease that fit the budget.

"It's been a long process. I've had a lot of help doing it," said Freeman.

"It seems to be a big need. From my understanding, it was a need before the flood... affordable housing. But this kind of just accentuated that and brought it to the forefront even more," said Bill Dieckman, the director of missions for Columbia Metro Baptist Association.

Dieckman says they've really worked to keep families near home, but affordable temporary rentals have been far and few between.

"They're already disrupted from the flood and lost everything, lots of them, so we try to be sensitive to that," said Dieckmann.

Trenton Court Apartments, which helped Freeman with a home, say they have other short term leases available for flood victims. Call the office at 803-731-2717 for more information.

A month post-flood and some neighborhoods are still inaccessible

By Billie Jean Shaw

[WIS TV 10 NBC Columbia](#), Nov. 19, 2015

COLUMBIA, SC (WIS) - Residents in the Forest Lake neighborhood says getting to and from their homes has been a nightmare since the October flood.

Look no further than Rockbridge Road where a bridge once stood near Percival Road. Now, it's nothing but a gaping hole.

Winna Ellis has lived beside Rockbridge Road for more than 30 years and said the bridge is the main way for people to get to Trenholm Road or Forest Drive. Now, a short drive has ballooned into a 20-minute trek to the main highway.

"You have to go out to Percival, around and down to get to Forest Drive," Ellis said. "You have to go down Decker and all around to get to Trenholm. So you're going long distances to try and get to this side of the bridge. They can't find us."

Eastshore Drive, Overcreek Road and Shorebrook Road are also closed as well. The state Department of Transportation says they have no date set on when those streets could reopen.

As far as Rockbridge Road, SCDOT says it is set to reopen this spring.

Agriculture Industry Reports Early Losses

South Carolina's agriculture industry heavy hit by flooding.

By Joyce Koh

[WLTX 19 Columbia CBS](#), November 18, 2015

Columbia, SC (WLTX)-The Ways and Means Committee heard from state agencies Wednesday on both the estimated costs of flood losses and legislative suggestions come January.

The flood has affected state departments and industries in both direct and indirect ways, but the losses are all significant and they say the numbers will only continue to grow.

One of the state's largest and hardest hit economic players, the agriculture industry, said their losses would exceed half a billion dollars.

"We had 465,000 acres of soybeans planted in 2015, approximately 215,000 acres of cotton and 100,000 acres of peanuts planted throughout the state," the South Carolina Department of Agriculture said. "Based on a conservative estimate, were looking at about an 80 percent loss ratio."

The Department of Health and Environmental Control was questioned about their regulation of dams. Director Catherine Heigel said they have had ongoing issues with regulation.

"We have been challenged to meet that inspection schedule, because of staffing over the years, so this is a longstanding issue, this is not just something that popped up," Heigel said.

Cities and Counties also reported their estimated current and future losses.

The Columbia Canal was the City's largest expense. The cost of all water control facilities, including the Canal was at an estimated total of \$90 Million.

Although there will be some help from the federal government through FEMA, it is also a critical time for state lawmakers to come up with their own plan for funding.

Right now, they are looking at two separate budget bills: one for their general appropriations, and now one for strictly flood related funding.

South Carolina agriculture losses double from flood

Tim Smith

[Greenville News](#), November 18, 2015

COLUMBIA – South Carolina's estimated agricultural losses from last month's floods have grown to almost \$600 million and farmers statewide are hurting, state officials say.

State Agriculture Commissioner Hugh Weathers initially estimated losses at \$300 million but officials with his agency told members of the House Ways and Means Committee on Wednesday that the total agriculture-related losses are now estimated at \$587 million. Agriculture is the state's biggest industry.

Farmers already faced a horrible year because of a late freeze and a summer drought, Assistant Agriculture Commissioner Clint Leach told the panel.

"They are to the point of desperation," he said.

The grim news came as the budget-writing committee heard final testimony from agencies as well as local officials on the impact of the flood, which killed 17 people, closed more than 500 state roads and bridges and displaced thousands.

Columbia City Manager Teresa Wilson told the panel that damage to her city's infrastructure alone is estimated at more than \$100 million, most of it to the Columbia Canal, a source of drinking water for the capital that breached during the record rains.

Much of the financial cost for repairing damage from the flood has not yet been tallied or released.

Agriculture officials, however, say they do have estimates and the damage has shaken farmers and those who make their living off of agricultural products, statewide. They said while they are talked to members of the state's

congressional delegation and to federal agriculture officials, the industry now is in “crisis.”

Rep. Brian White, an Anderson Republican and chairman of the committee, said he believes the state should provide some financial assistance.

“We help other industries,” he said. “It’s time we help farmers too.”

Leach said his agency has surveyed the damage and talked to farmers.

“Our industry has been hit very hard,” he said. “Our farmers are in deep despair. We’re hearing from them constantly.”

He said according to a study done for his agency by a retired Clemson economics professor, losses in the field, primarily from soybeans, peanuts and cotton, amount to \$329 million, with another \$46 million in losses from plantings that could not occur, \$114 million in lost wages for 3,500 jobs, and millions more in indirect costs.

Farmers, he said, are not interested in obtaining low-interest loans, the aid being offered by the federal government. That’s because farmers have gone a year without much income, officials said, some already had operating loans and they have no cash flow to pay for additional debt.

Aaron Wood, an assistant agriculture commissioner, told the panel that while many farmers have crop insurance, it’s inadequate for a natural disaster like this flood.

“People think if farmers just had crop insurance that will save the day,” he said. “Well that’s not true.”

He said there was no level of insurance farmers could purchase that would cover just the input costs for their crops. That’s primarily because crop prices are so low this year.

Also, he said, crop insurance doesn’t cover tree losses and the state is expecting to lose 5 percent of its peach trees due to the flood. The state is the No. 2 producer of peaches in the nation.

And payments can’t be made until a crop is harvested or destroyed. He said that means farmers in the state may have to wait until February or March to receive any money.

“Farmers need to be paid now,” he said.

Wood said farmers are frustrated by the bureaucracy and depressed.

“Losing a home is bad,” he said. “But losing a job and income potential is hopeless. This is a food and economic security emergency.”

Rep. Jimmy Bales, a Richland County farmer who sits on the committee, agreed.

He said he lost 200 bales of hay when his barn flooded. He said he applied for aid but by the time he answered all the questions in person and over the phone “I wished I had never even thought of it.”

“That’s sort of sad when the government says I come to help and I’m set up to assist you, but they aggravate you so much you wish you hadn’t gotten involved,” he said.

Wood warned that there will be “a lot” of foreclosures on farmers next year.

The floods also impacted thousands of forestry owners, State Forester Gene Kodama said.

He said while his agency initially estimated \$65 million in damage from the floods, that number will be higher. And he said it is impacting not just owners but loggers, whose impact is a “sad, sad story.”

Some, who already are “neck-deep” in loans, are going out of business, he said.

And wood mills, which are struggling to find wood in their area, are hanging on “by the skin of their teeth.”

The forest industry in the state was hit last year with \$360 million in damage from an ice storm, he said.

Also testifying before lawmakers Wednesday about the flood was Catherine Heigel, director of the state Department of Health and Environmental Control.

Heigel talked to legislators about the 36 dams that failed from the flood, 31 of which were regulated by her agency, and the department’s dam safety program, which she said is understaffed and in need of more expertise.

In a recent story, The Greenville News reported that DHEC’s dam-safety program has only 6.75 full-time equivalent employees – the highest staffing level in recent years – and that at least 12 dams out of the 75 covered under last month’s emergency orders hadn’t been previously inspected for five years or longer.

The newspaper also revealed that only three emergency orders had been issued statewide between 2010 and the latest round of orders.

Heigel said while she is asking for more staff in dam safety, she is not sure even had there been more staff that the dam failures could have been prevented.

She said a variety of factors are behind the dam failures, including the fact that many were built before World War II and before dam standards existed.

Some had maintenance issues such as an overgrowth of vegetation and some were built without many homes around them and now face downstream population centers because of development.

“I can’t stand here and tell you that had we had full staffing for this program with the current regulatory regime for the last five years that the outcome would have been any different,” she said. “I don’t think it would have. It might

have for one or two.”

She said the question is how can the state “learn from this tragedy, make the program stronger, protect South Carolinians and instill confidence in them that if they do live downstream, that there is a coordinated approach to monitoring these dams and to keeping them safe.”

Her agency has recently issued 167 repair orders to dam owners, who are responsible for keeping their dams safe, and she said that all who were given recent enforcement deadlines complied.

She said the costs associated with making the repairs necessary on the 30 failed dams will be “very high” and it is an open question as to who will pay for them in cases where the owners cannot afford the repairs, which could be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars at a minimum.

She said among her recommendations are that dam owners submit regular assessments of their dams and that state inspections of the most high-risk dams be done each year.

“For the next two years we have a tremendous workload,” she said. “Ultimately it’s going to fall to us to do some of this work. I have every confidence in my staff. But we need more expertise.”

South Carolina officials say estimated agricultural losses from last month's floods doubled

[The Associated Press](#), 11/19/15 5:47 am EST

COLUMBIA, South Carolina — South Carolina officials say the state's estimated agricultural losses from last month's floods have doubled.

Multiple media outlets report State Agriculture Commissioner Hugh Weathers initially estimated losses at \$300 million. However, officials with his agency told the House Ways and Means Committee on Wednesday that the total agriculture-related losses are now estimated at \$587 million.

Assistant Agriculture Commissioner Clint Leach told the panel that South Carolina farmers already faced a difficult year because of a late freeze and a summer drought.

The news came as the budget-writing committee heard final testimony from agencies and local officials on the flooding's impact.

Although much of the financial cost for repairing damage from the flood has not yet been tallied or released, agricultural officials say they do have estimates.

South Carolina farmers hope for a lifeline as flood losses pile up

Gavin Jackson

[Charleston Post and Courier](#), Nov 18, 2015

COLUMBIA — State agriculture officials said farmers and the state’s largest industry are in crisis following last month’s devastating flooding.

A \$587 million hit is rippling across South Carolina’s agribusiness, with approximately \$376 million in crop losses and \$114 million in lost wages.

The forestry sector incurred a \$65 million loss.

Assistant Commissioner Clint Leach told the House Ways and Means Committee on Wednesday that historic flooding and subsequent rains made a marginal year for South Carolina farmers — faced with a late freeze, crippling drought and low commodity prices — catastrophic.

“They are to the point of desperation,” Leach said. “They are not interested in low-interest loans ... With complete losses in the fields it’s hard for them to take on more debt.”

Under the 2014 farm bill, crop insurance changed from a guaranteed direct payment system to one based upon market prices or countywide average yields. Farmers can’t be paid until crops are harvested or destroyed — if they’re considered a 100 percent loss.

“Crop insurance, as we are finding out, was not designed for this type of loss, the scope of this loss and across the spectrum of crops that we’ve seen,” Assistant Commissioner Aaron Wood said. “Crop insurance is not the savior that some folks think it is.”

For example, production costs would be \$580 per acre of cotton. Assuming farmers purchased 70 percent insurance coverage, a crop insurance payout would be \$330, leaving \$250 uncovered; or \$53.5 million, if multiplied across the 215,000 acres planted in the state.

“They essentially lost a year’s salary this year and have no way to make next year’s salary,” Wood said. “This is a food and economic security emergency in South Carolina.”

Grant funding may be available through Community Development Block Grant funding under the federal government. A similar \$262 million grant package was available in Colorado in 2013. Leach believes, under that precedent, South Carolina should be allowed to do the same.

A program in the farm bill also would assist farmers affected by floods, but it has not been funded.

Meanwhile, losses will ripple across the state's \$41.7 billion agriculture industry.

David Winkles, president of the S.C. Farm Bureau, expects farm foreclosures, supplier losses and even car dealers will take a hit as farmers cut costs next year — if they make it another year.

"We are going to lose multigenerational farms because of the conditions we have," Winkles said. "Some cotton ginneries had crews hired and already had to lay them off."

Winkles recently lobbied in Washington for additional funding. Leach expects money to appear in a congressional spending bill next month.

Federal agriculture officials will tour hard-hit areas on Friday.

Wood added that farmers don't want a handout, just a hand up.

"To me it's not my job," Clarendon County farmer Jeremy Cannon wrote to South Carolina's representatives in Congress. "It's my heritage, my family, my life, and now its future is in the balance, hoping for someone to throw out a lifeline."

EDITORIAL: S.C. farmers rate state help

[Charleston Post and Courier](#), Nov 19 2015 12:01 am

Extreme weather is a menace to all — but especially to farmers. And as South Carolina Agriculture Commissioner Hugh Weathers told us last week during a visit to this newspaper:

"Some years we have freezes, some years we have droughts, some years we have floods. This year, we've had all three."

So this year our state's farmers have suffered a triple whammy of costly, climate-driven setbacks. That presents a serious threat not just to them, but to the S.C. economy. This makes a strong argument for state relief to save farmers now on the brink of bankruptcy.

Further bolstering that case: The S.C. Board of Economic Advisors said last week it has found an extra \$1.2 billion in the state coffers for the 2016-17 budget year.

Federal assistance should help South Carolina's farmers bounce back from the devastating weather year — to a degree. But Mr. Weathers told us he also has alerted key state legislators that the General Assembly must contribute to this rescue mission.

As he put it: "We're going to turn over every rock to minimize the impact."

Mr. Weathers estimates that crop damage alone to S.C. farmers this year totals from \$300 million to \$360 million, with crop insurance likely to cover no more than a third of that. That's not counting the huge financial losses from agricultural equipment gone idle and lost wages to workers,

Fortunately, though, despite this year's reverses, all is not bleak in S.C. agriculture. The commissioner pointed out that the state's agribusiness sector, which includes farming and the timber industry, grew by 23 percent from 2006 to the start of this year. That reaped a 2014 economic impact of \$41.7 billion while supporting 212,000 jobs.

Meanwhile, despite sustained population growth and development, the state retains nearly 5 million acres of farmland. The State Conservation Bank has helped maintain that asset through easements providing effective incentives to re-invest in agricultural land, which comprises 30 percent of the property it covers.

And over the last eight years, the Certified S.C. Carolina Grown program has expanded from 50 farmers to nearly 1,900 while sparking a steep increase in the purchase of fresh, state-harvested fruits and vegetables. Farm exports from our state have also been on the rise.

Mr. Weathers did warn, however, that the average S.C. farmer is now nearly 60 years old. As he asked: "Who's going to grow our food 10, 15 years from now?"

He cited, as part of a positive answer, Wadmalaw Island's Dirtworks Incubator Farm, which is run by Lowcountry Local First, a collaborative effort of landowners and private enterprises. It's a relatively small parcel of land where aspiring farmers can learn the art — and the business — of agriculture.

A clear and present challenge for state lawmakers, though, should be helping current, weather-battered S.C. farmers stay in business.

What about our farmers - Historic flood destroys crops (w/video)

BY MICHAELE DUKE

[Kingstree News](#), November 18, 2015

Local farmers share their stories in the wake of the October flood and subsequent rains in November that have left their fields too saturated to harvest their crops.

ROTTEN POTATOES

Herbie Brown moves a shovel of earth from his 75-acre field to reveal a cluster of sweet potatoes. He scoops up two potatoes; rotting wads and the heavy odor of their demise are all that's left after the October flood. On this day in November he watches more rains saturate already soaked fields.

Brown is a third generation farmer who farms about 4,000 acres of wheat, corn, peas sweet potatoes and peanuts. He estimates 75 percent of his cotton, sweet potato crops and 40 percent of his peanut crop is lost. "We still have some we haven't dug and don't know when we'll get back to harvest them." Brown said green peanuts and sweet potatoes are not insurable. He and most local farmers have never experienced weather like this. "We've had over 30 inches of rain in 30 days," said Brown. "It's bad." He said he'll turn his losses to Federal Crop Insurance but he isn't optimistic. "There's no way you can survive off that. It will hardly pay what you got in the crop. You can only hope the banks will go along with us and finance us again."

WET COTTON

Standing in his 35-acre field, Mark Scott picks up a cotton boll from the wet ground. He pulls the white fibers apart to expose a seed. A tiny white appendage reaches out from the seed. "There's no weight there, so you're not going to get anything for that," he says of the premature sprout. "You put a seed in damp dirt it's going to get up, same as cotton. If it stays wet for days - if it never dries out that's what's going to happen." He gently shakes a plant and bolls fall to the ground. The cotton picker will miss those bolls, along with hundreds that already lay on the ground.

Before the historic flood that decimated thousands of acres throughout the state, he was looking at 1,200-pound cotton per acre. He now estimates a third of his crop is gone. "Now you can take 300 pounds - maybe even 400 pounds that's going to be on the ground that we're not going to pick."

Scott is a second-generation farmer. He and son, Gordon, farm 2,000 acres of corn, peanuts, soybeans and cotton. When the cotton is ginned the farmer sells the seed and lint. The seed Scott says nearly pays for the ginning. "If the seeds good, this is going to be light." As more rains come in November, Scott's hope of salvaging what's left has been dashed. "I don't know," said Scott gazing over the muck and broken branches. "We might all be looking for different jobs."

MUDDY PEANUTS

Marty Easler is one of Williamsburg County's largest farmers. He stands in a muddy peanut field. Easler pulls a plant from the ground and shakes off the dirt. Peanuts fall to the ground by the dozen. "See how the peanuts are on the ground. When you dig them up they stay down there," said Easler of what was to be a bumper crop. "Those are the best peanuts. We should have been digging them two weeks ago but it was raining." If he harvests anything it will be small - and light - immature peanuts. "While we're gathering - we're maybe getting only half of the peanuts, we're losing more than half of the good peanuts' weight. So we're only going to get about a third of the crop."

Easler, who farms with several family members, said this couldn't have happened at a worse time. He added that loans aren't the answer. "Our problem now is we're trying to pay our loan back. You can't borrow yourself out of debt." Easler said overall he has a \$1 million invested in his crops. "All our money is sitting in the field and we're not going to be able to get it." He said it is in a farmer's nature to salvage their crops.

He estimates he will salvage about \$600,000 (of the million investment) out of his crops but he will spend \$100,000 in expenses to do so. "That is fuel, labor, chemical, trucks running up and down the road, employees and parts. I could leave it in the field - save that \$100,000 but I'm going to spend that \$100,000 and get \$600,000."

Easler said he knows they can get a low interest loan but argues that route is not the way to go. "It's hard to borrow yourself into prosperity," he said. Easler's crop counselor Dawn White agreed, adding don't be surprised if many farmers don't make it. "Don't be surprised if you see foreclosures and bankruptcies everywhere," she said. "There were many that were in a hole coming into this year. They pretty much had to beg, plead, put their house up - whatever they had to do to get their loan to operate this year, that's money spent."

Farming in Williamsburg County

A 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture county profile shows Williamsburg County consists of 679 farms. Williamsburg ranks in the top 10 among the 46 counties for (acres) soybeans, cotton and upland cotton, and corn for grain. Crop sales in 2012 were \$61,811 or 83 percent of market value of products sold.

Are we close to record rainfall for November?

By Anna Lee,

[Greenville News](#), November 18, 2015

We are nowhere near the record rainfall for the month of November, but it might feel like it, and for good reason.

Two-thirds of the way through the month, the rain gauge at the National Weather Service in Greer already has recorded nearly 6 inches of rain — four inches more than we normally see at this point in the year.

And guess what? Get ready for more. The Upstate could see gusty winds, heavy rain and maybe even a tornado as a thick band of storms was forecast to sweep through the region late Wednesday.

Up to 2.5 inches of rain is expected to fall in the Greenville area, which remains under a flash flood watch until 10 a.m. Thursday, the Weather Service said.

The watch was issued at 11:49 a.m. Wednesday for the greater Greenville, Spartanburg and Anderson areas and

includes the cities of Walhalla, Westminster, Seneca, Easley, Clemson, Greer, Mauldin and Simpsonville.

Showers were forecast to start falling after sunset, with the heaviest rainfall rates to occur late Wednesday night into early Thursday morning, the Weather Service said.

Some areas facing the mountains may see rain totals approach 5 inches.

Given the recent rainfall over the region, this additional moderate to heavy rain will lead to rapid rises along creeks and streams, according to the Weather Service.

The fast-moving band of storms also could deliver isolated thunderstorms, damaging winds and an environment that could support "a brief and weak tornado east of Interstate 85," the Weather Service said.

Nearly 6 inches of rain has fallen at Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport since Nov. 1, according to preliminary Weather Service reports. The wettest November on record was 12.18 inches of rainfall in 1948.

The normal precipitation total for November is 3.7 inches, the Weather Service said.

Tecklenburg is Charleston's new mayor

[WCIV, ABC Charleston/WOLO ABC Columbia](#), Nov 18, 2015

CHARLESTON, S.C. (WCIV) -- Charleston businessman John Tecklenburg jumped to an early lead Tuesday night in the runoff election for mayor and never let go.

During a speech he started just before 9 p.m., Tecklenburg singled out his wife, his son who managed the campaign, and Ginny Deerin who it appears pulled all of her support two weeks ago into Tecklenburg's corner.

But Tecklenburg says now the work of managing a city begins.

He said he wanted to look at improving basic city services, setting a high standard of ethics in the city's government, make it easier for residents to talk to elected officials, implement greater tourism management, manage growth, add a senior center in West Ashley and a community center in Daniel Island, as well as focus on drainage and flooding problems around the city.

"This year was a defining moment in our city's history," he said, referring to the mass shooting at Emanuel AME Church. "It was an assault on humanity, an assault on civilization."

Tecklenburg said he was moved by the city's reaction, leading with grace and compassion after the shooting, helping those hurting the most to heal. He said he wanted to see that carry through to all parts of the city -- education, the jobless, and housing affordability.

"That's how we earn the name of being the Holy City is by helping our brothers and sisters," Tecklenburg said, paraphrasing John F. Kennedy: "Ask not what Charleston can do for you, but what you can do for Charleston."

Tecklenburg captured 57.5 percent of the vote, compared to 42.5 percent for S.C. Rep. Leon Stavrakis, according to unofficial results.

Stavrakis called Tecklenburg to concede the race shortly before taking the stage at his campaign party, calling on everyone to put their support behind Tecklenburg as he takes over the city.

"It was all about the place we love -- Charleston. Nothing has changed. It's still all about this place," he told supporters. "Tomorrow morning the race is over. It's all about Charleston."

Outgoing Mayor Joe Riley made stops at both campaigns and released a statement before Tecklenburg was declared winner.

"The community has been fortunate to have two fine candidates. John Tecklenburg will be an excellent mayor and he is looking forward to working with him during this transition period. Tonight is their night," he said.

The results will be certified Thursday at 10 a.m. at the Charleston County Election Commission. Riley's last day is Jan. 11; Tecklenburg will take over the following day.

Just 270 votes separated the two candidates in the six-way general election two weeks ago, but on Tuesday Tecklenburg's won by 3,527 votes. The total turnout Tuesday was about 19 percent.

Tecklenburg will be the first new Charleston mayor in 40 years. He and Stavrakis were the top finishers two weeks ago in a six-way nonpartisan race to succeed Joe Riley who is retiring after 10 terms in office. Riley has served as mayor longer than anyone in Charleston's 345-year history.

There were also runoff elections for Charleston City Council and Mount Pleasant Town Council.

Gary White captured 52 percent of the vote to beat Shawn Pinkston in Charleston City District 1.

James Lewis, Jr. had about 54 percent of the vote in Charleston City District 3, defeating Jimmy Bailey.

In Mount Pleasant, Will Haynie and Jim Owens took the two remaining town council seats. Haynie had 39 percent and Owens had 36.5 percent. Chris O'Neal finished with 24 percent of the vote.

'Project Jacket,' \$1.75M bond approved at special meeting

by Robert Joseph Baker

[Manning Times/Manning Live](#), November 19, 2015

Clarendon County Council members unanimously approved Monday a fee-in-lieu-of-taxes agreement with a still-

secret company that has pledged to bring roughly 70 jobs and \$32 million in investment to the area.

The details for the arrangement between the county and “Project Jacket,” including the company’s identity, will be revealed in mid-December, said Clarendon County Development Board Executive Director George Kosinski.

“Now that the FILOT has been approved after three readings of an ordinance by council, we will let the company know, and they will accept, and then there will be a formal announcement in December, once all the I’s are dotted and the T’s are crossed,” Kosinski said.

Such agreements – in which a company pledges a set annual fee for payment instead of property taxes – are common in South Carolina, and state laws allow the agreements to be kept secret until companies accept.

“You don’t want to announce anything too soon that would make the deal fall through,” Kosinski said.

He did reveal Monday that the company will go in the Clarendon County Industrial Park. Clarendon County Council Chairman Dwight Stewart said the company has “nothing to do with apparel, despite its name,” and that the project is not a landfill for bringing waste from other states, as some readers have speculated. County Council first approached the agreement during a special morning meeting held Nov. 2, and then held a second reading at its regular monthly meeting Nov. 9. A public hearing also held Monday night before third reading saw no comments from the public about the deal.

Council members also unanimously approved Monday the third and final reading of an ordinance that will allow the issue of \$1.75 million in general obligation bonds to fund capital projects needed due to recent flooding.

“This will allow us to borrow some short-term money that will help with some of the expenses we have incurred as a result of the October floods,” said Stewart.

County Administrator David Epperson said the bonds will be used “basically for capital needs related to flood relief,” including road repairs and the repairs of equipment which might be damaged during such infrastructure work.

Epperson said the county, by issuing the bonds, will essentially be doing “what a lot of small business owners and homeowners have to do sometimes, which is open a line of credit.”

“For a small business that can be fairly easy to do; for us, it requires three ordinance readings and a public hearing,” Epperson said. “We want to attend to this matter in a timely fashion, and that’s the reason for the meetings three weeks in a row.”

Epperson said the bond will be issued only for a 12-month period, and will “allow us to borrow the funds needed for these capital projects.”

“The plan is to be able to roll that over for another 12 months, but our intent is to pay that down before these become debt millage to pay it,” Epperson said. “We feel this is the best way to go about handling these council projects while allowing us to do what is necessary to recover from this storm.”

The bonds would be paid off, in-part, Epperson noted in the Nov. 2 meeting, through reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The federal organization will refund up to 75 percent for such capital projects, which include bridges and roads affected by the floods in early October.

Clarendon County had more than 50 road washouts in early October, and about 16 of those remain unresolved, and will be at least through Thanksgiving.

“That leaves the county with 25 percent of the costs,” Epperson said. “We’re hoping that the state of South Carolina will assist with some of that 25 percent.”

As with the FILOT agreement, no one spoke during a public hearing on the bond ordinance.

In other business, council members approved second reading of an ordinance that will allow Clarendon School District 2 to issue \$2.7 million in bonds for renovations to Manning High School.

Clarendon 2 Superintendent John Tindal said District 2 board members voted in October to make the renovations, which include the construction of a new field house at the rear of the campus to meet the athletic needs of the students there.

Tindal said the district also hopes to renovate the stadium “by moving the entrance from where it is currently to about midway,” he said. “This would allow the home team and visitors to each buy tickets and go their own ways without coming together.”

Tindal said the move will “facilitate entering and leaving the stadium at a much easier pace.”

He said the bonds will also be used to renovate the high school’s office.

“That office was built about 30 years ago, and the function of that office today is significantly different than what it was designed for back then,” he said. “We have done lots of things internally in that building since we began to make changes, and this will allow us the necessary changes for the principal and administrators to supervise students and visitors.”

Councilman Benton Blakely was not present at Monday’s meeting.

Saluda Shoals Park up and operating for holiday lights show

By Michal Higdon

[WIS TV 10 NBC Columbia](#), Nov 18, 2015

Also on [WCSC Live 5, Charleston](#)

COLUMBIA, SC (WIS) - The return to normalcy continues across South Carolina more than a month after the devastating flood.

One of the hardest hit areas in the Midlands included Saluda Shoals Park. After the rain subsided, the park was underwater for three days while some areas saw up to 15 feet of moving water in areas. Over 55 electrical panels and 400 receptacles were submerged and had to be replaced. Over 4,000 pounds of dead fish were in the park. And that's just some of it.

The estimated damage is about \$150,000, but management says they're in good shape at this point from where they were. The park is still seeing some standing water and sand all over the grounds. But from three weeks after the flood they were back to be 95 percent operational. That's all thanks to everyone coming together -- especially the maintenance team.

"It was a tremendous team effort," Saluda Shoals Park director Mark Smyers said. "The maintenance crew, you almost think of them as the offensive linemen of a great offense. They're the ones in the trenches that put in the time and effort and maybe don't receive all the accolades, but they really deserve it. They have worked really hard over this past month, month and a half to get the park to be what it is," says Saluda Shoals Park Director Mark Smyers.

Part of getting the park back to normal is setting up the annual Holiday Lights on the River. The park begins setting up the holiday displays a couple of months in advance, but flood waters back in October rose so high it carried some of them away and many were damaged.

Folks wondered if the light show would be able to start in time -- a huge concern because it brings in about 1/3rd of the operating budget for Saluda Shoals. But the good news is everything has been repaired and will be ready for the holiday lights show this year. You will be able to see 400 light displays this year on the two mile loop. Last year the holiday lights show attracted 72,000 people and officials are hoping this year that will go up to 76,000.

"During the holiday season, it's a tradition for folks to come out with their families and it's a great way to kind of blow the kids' minds during the holiday season to see all these beautiful holiday displays. So we are excited to be able to offer it at no damage. You're going to get the same show that you know and love," Smyers said.

Rail update

[Charleston Regional Business Journal](#), Nov. 19, 2015

BMW cars, along with other cargo, have been rerouted for more than a month after October's flooding destroyed a bridge in Columbia. Norfolk Southern uses the bridge that runs over the Broad River to move freight between the Upstate and the Lowcountry.

Norfolk Southern made an alternative route from Greer to Charlotte available. BMW moved cars on that route, avoiding the damaged bridge, and then on to Columbia and Charleston. Some of the cars were also trucked to the port.

Newsome said some of the cargo might have been rerouted to other ports.

"I don't think that lasted for long, if they did it at all. We all got on top of it. ... But we probably saw some diversion," Newsome said.

The bridge is expected to be rebuilt and back online by Nov. 30, which Newsome called a "herculean result."

"This was not an insignificant rail trestle that got wiped out in the flooding," Newsome said. "Norfolk did a great job re-establishing rail service within a week when it started rerouting trains."

South Carolina fund established to help flooding victims

[by Palmetto Business Daily Reports](#), Nov 18, 2015

The One SC Fund, an initiative to raise funds to assist individuals and families negatively impacted by the torrential rains and subsequent flooding that hit the Palmetto State in early October, was announced earlier this week by South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley.

"When government is done, we have to keep going, and so we started a One South Carolina fund ... to allow us to complete the work the government can't do," Haley said. "We are asking the people of South Carolina to step up today. We're asking the people of the country to step up today. We're saying if you were blessed and did not have damage with your home, if you were blessed and you had insurance, if you were blessed and you're able to get back into a safe place, pay it forward."

South Carolinians across the state were impacted by the flooding.

One SC Fund's advisory committee includes former South Carolina Gov. David Beasley; Tajh Boyd, former starting quarterback for Clemson University; Stephen Colbert, host of The Late Show on CBS; Jay Hass, PGA golfer currently playing on the Champions Tour; Marcus Lattimore, former starting running back for the University of South Carolina; Edwin McCain, recording artist; Bob McNair, founder, chairman and CEO of the Houston Texans; Craig

Melvin, MSNBC Anchor and NBC news correspondent; Chris Randolph, partner at South Street Partners; Jerry Richardson, founder and owner of the Carolina Panthers; Joe Riley, Mayor of Charleston for 40 years, Darius Rucker, Grammy award-winning recording artist; Steve Spurrier, former head football coach at the University of South Carolina; Dawn Staley, head women's basketball coach at the University of South Carolina; Dabo Swinney, head football coach at Clemson University; and Anita Zucker, CEO of The InterTech Group.

More information is available online at www.onescfund.org.

Improvements coming soon for Lost Road Creek Bridge

By Leah Holloway

[WACH Fox 57](#), Columbia, November 18, 2015

COLUMBIA, SC (WACH)-Several buildings were destroyed, debris from damaged homes are continuously being collected, but bridges and roads are definitely a top priority for the City of Columbia after the devastating flood.

Several people have made changes in their daily driving routine since several roads and bridges are still blocking people from travel.

Next to the Columbia Canal, the Lost Creek Road Bridge is at the top of the city's list for reconstruction.

We spoke with residents in the Chestnut Hill neighborhood that usually take that route to get to work and some say their commute time has doubled.

At Wednesday's emergency council meeting, Mayor Steve Benjamin mentioned there are safety access issues dealing with Lost Creek Bridge and work is being done as we speak and will continue to be done.

The total cost for repairs on the Lost Creek Bridge is estimated to cost more than \$700,000, there is no timeline set for when road repairs will be fixed.

Mayor Benjamin says the city has been working closely with the South Carolina Department of Transportation and hopes to finish these projects as quickly as possible.

S.C. home sales down 5.5% in October

By Ashley Heffernan

[Charleston Regional Business Journal](#), Nov. 18, 2015

The number of S.C. homes, condos and villas sold in October declined by 5.5%, from 5,863 to 5,540, compared with October 2014, according to a monthly report from the S.C. Association of Realtors.

The median sales price, however, increased 7.8%, from \$160,500 last year to \$173,000.

"We expected the numbers to look different this month. On one hand, national jobless claims are at an all-time low, and on the other hand, we're expecting a rise in interest rates. South Carolinians are also still contending with the aftermath of the October floods and new Respa rules. There are many variables at play right now," Realtors association CEO Nick Kremydas said in the report.

New listings across the state decreased nearly 7% to 7,693, and pending sales dropped 10.3% to 4,798, the report said. Homes stayed on the market an average of 98 days during October. That's down 14 days from the previous year.

Total properties for sale fell to 37,453, a decrease of 6.1% from October 2014. That means 6.2 months' worth of inventory is available, down 17.3% from last year, the association said.

DHEC to reopen some shellfish harvesting areas in Charleston County

By Shawn Cabbagestalk

[WCBF News 2 Charleston](#) NBC, November 18, 2015

COLUMBIA, S.C. – The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control will reopen some shellfish harvesting areas in Charleston County previously closed due to excessive rainfall.

These areas will reopen the morning of Thursday, Nov. 19.

"Water quality data indicate that the approved harvesting areas from Capt. Sams Inlet north to the Charleston Harbor, with the exception of Schooner Creek and its tributaries, are suitable for harvesting," said Mike Pearson, manager of DHEC's Shellfish Sanitation Section.

For more information on clam and oyster harvesting areas in Charleston County, call DHEC's Charleston Environmental Health Services Office at (843) 953-0150.

South Carolina frustrated by mosquitos, standing water, future costs

By Sarita Chourey

[Morris News Service/Bluffton Today](#), Nov. 18, 2015

COLUMBIA — Death and property loss hit South Carolina during the historic flood, but more than a month later, mosquitoes, standing water and excessive stormwater runoff are refusing to let the state return to normal.

"Everybody in this state is struggling with the issue of stormwater," said Rep. Kenny Bingham, R-Cayce, during a House committee meeting Wednesday.

On older properties, residents had ditches running through their back yards, he said. Those ditches were

eventually filled in, which led to water backing up onto other properties.

“People who have never had flooding issues before, all of a sudden got water backing up under their house and don’t know where it’s going,” said Bingham.

“That infrastructure has got to go in, or it is going to cripple us.”

But he said strengthening drainage infrastructure will be expensive, and governments don’t want to take ownership of the task.

The result is standing water, which allows mosquitos to thrive.

Counties are running out of resources to control the insects, Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter, D-Orangeburg, told S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control Director Catherine Heigel.

“What is amazing to me is how DHEC can take the attitude that infectious disease which mosquitoes carry is not something that is in their bailiwick,” said Cobb-Hunter, adding that the agency shouldn’t dump the responsibility on counties.

Heigel responded that the agency takes the risk of mosquito-borne diseases very seriously and already helps at the county level.

“I am absolutely open to a conversation about mosquito control on a broader level, because as I noted there are counties where ether have no capability whatsoever,” said Heigel. “I agree with you it’s a public health threat. There’s no question.”

Wednesday’s committee meeting was lawmakers’ latest attempt to determine how much the catastrophic flood, which killed 19 people, would cost the state.

Among those to report to the committee were officials from the hard-hit Midlands region.

Columbia City Manager Teresa Wilson said there has been no system-wide boil-water notice in recent memory like the one experienced last month. For 10 days nearly 400,000 people lost access to secure drinking water, when a 60-foot stretch of the Columbia Canal was breached, dropping the water level too low for the city to pump its water into the treatment plant. More than 100 streets were closed or impassable, while several sewer and water lines ruptured.

Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin spoke about the 11 trillion gallons of water that had soaked the state, leaving whole neighborhoods underwater and lives lost and interrupted.

“Thousands of families are still in crisis, and their needs are very real and very immediate,” Benjamin said.

Arcadia Lakes Mayor Mark Huguley said the flood had eroded the town’s identity. Its motto is “seven lakes, one town,” but since the flood, he said, it’s more like “four lakes, one town.”

Housing starts fall to lowest level since the spring after storms, flooding

By Jeffry Bartash

[MarketWatch](#), Nov 18, 2015

Yet rebound in permits signal increase in construction

The National Guard was plenty busy in October when heavy flooding wracked South Carolina. But many home builders had to put construction on hold.

WASHINGTON (MarketWatch) — Home builders scaled back construction in October, especiall in the South where storms and flooding disrupted work.

So-called housing starts fell 11% last month to an annual rate of 1.06 million, the Commerce Department said Wednesday. That’s the lowest level since March.

Housing starts in September were also revised down slightly to a seasonally adjusted 1.19 million rate.

Yet a rebound in permits to build new homes suggests the slowdown in October is likely to be temporary. Permits rose 4.1% last month to a 1.15 million annual rate.

The reduced level of construction in October occurred primarily in the South, where starts fell 18.6%. Half of all new homes are being built in the South, the fastest growing part of the country.

Permits to build new homes in the South, however, rose in October to the highest level in eight years, a sign builders are moving forward with new construction.

What’s more, nationwide permits for single-family homes rose 2.4% in October to an annual rate of 711,000. That’s the highest level since the end of 2007. Single-family homes account for about three-quarters of the U.S. housing market.

“Rising building permits signal that housing activity remains on an expansionary path,” said Gregory Daco, head of U.S. macroeconomics at Oxford Economics. Sales and construction of new homes have been rising amid a surge in hiring and an improved U.S. economy.

The number of new homes already under construction is also at a seven-year high. What’s especially hot are buildings with five units or more that are likely to be rented. Construction on these buildings hit a 41-year peak last month.

An improving housing market has been one of the bright spots for the U.S. economy over the past year. While a bit of a slowdown is expected during the winter, builders are still very optimistic.

Local Church to Provide a "House in a Box" for Flood Victims

St. Joseph Catholic Church is raising money for a "House in a Box" for families who have lost everything.

By Loren Thomas

[WLTX 19, Columbia CBS](#), November 18, 2015

Hundreds of families around the Midlands are trying to get back on their feet after flooding destroyed everything that they own, but one local church says they can help with that.

Columbia, SC (WLTX) - As families around the Midlands are recovering from flood damage, one church is hoping to help people get back on their feet by providing furniture.

"Water started coming in after the sump pumps failed, so it came in through the ground and started coming in through the crawl space," says Rachel Larrett.

Larrett says her basement filled up with several feet of water on October 4th, destroying all of her furniture after moving it down there several days before for home repairs.

"It wouldn't have been as bad if we hadn't just moved everything we own into the basement," says Larrett. "We were taking up the carpet and redoing the floors, so everything but a couple items in the house that were too heavy to come down there we had to throw out."

Now she's still assessing the damage done to her home and looking to rebuild and replace the items she lost.

"You spent a lifetime getting furniture and a tv and then all of a sudden in one day it's gone and you have to go and get all of this in one go and it's a crazy amount of money," says Larrett.

Her story is all too familiar to hundreds of families around the Midlands who lost everything. That's why the St. Joseph Catholic Church in Columbia is looking to turn all of that around by providing a "House in a Box."

"It's pretty much a good starter kit for a new house," says Russ Jones.

Jones with St Joseph says the "House in a Box" program will provide brand new furniture for families, including things like beds, dressers, sofas, and kitchen supplies.

"St Vincent De Paul has been doing this since Hurricane Katrina and we helped 15,000 families down there," says Jones. "Right now we're involved in 21 disasters around the united state and this is what we do. We provide houses in a box."

Jones says \$50,000 can help provide furniture for 25 families. The church is looking to help at least 1,000 home owners in the Midlands.

"The greatest need is right here and that's why we're here," says Jones.

He's hoping that donations can help the church reach their goal and help families like Larrett, who lost everything.

The church is collecting donations for the "House in a Box" program on their Go-Fund-Me page and can click the link here to help their cause.

Oliver Gospel Comes Up Short Hundreds of Donations

By Savannah Levins

[WLTX 19 CBS Columbia](#), November 18, 2015

COLUMBIA, SC (WLTX)- Oliver Gospel Mission will have to reach into their operating funds because of a lack of donations for their Thanksgiving Box program.

The mission has promised 300 needy families a box of food for Thanksgiving. Each box is filled with a turkey, pie, mac and cheese, peas, stuffing, yams, and cranberries.

By the Wednesday morning deadline for food donations, the mission was still short hundreds of items. They only had 20 turkeys of the 300 they needed, and only had about 40 boxes of stuffing, when they 600 boxes.

"One of the things I love about Columbia is we are such a community of support," said ministry director Jeremy Lohead. "So there's been an outpouring of support for people who have been affected by the flood, but the side effect of that is some of the support that is going there is not coming to us. And so we've seen a deficit in giving to the mission."

Now the mission has to reach into pocket to pay for the items for the Thanksgiving boxes, funds that the non-profit would usually use for other homeless support programs.

"We have a recovery program, we've got our emergency shelter program, a program for people who are having problems obtaining employment. And those programs are supported by those same dollars," Lohead said.

He also noted they feed the Midlands homeless for \$2.79 per person, per day. So the hundreds of dollars they will have to spend on turkeys is a major setback.

"Many families who have been hit by the flood have experienced for the first time what the men we serve experience 365 days a year," Lohead said. "The homeless are still homeless. These are people who are in crisis, who

are in need. Something has happened in their life that has drastically altered their world. And we are able to provide a service or reach out to them and give them hope."

If you'd like to donate to help cover the costs of the thanksgiving boxes, click [here](#). Be sure to mark WLTX News 19 in the "how did you hear about us" column so we can track donations.

Officials say clear leaves from ditches, storm drains to help prevent flooding

By Dal Kalsi

[WHNS, FOX Carolina](#) Nov. 18, 2015

GREENVILLE, SC (FOX Carolina) - Officials are urging Upstate residents to clear out gutters, ditches and storm drains near their homes as another round of heavy rain heads toward the area Wednesday.

Fallen leaves and other debris may be blocking storm drains, leading to flooding concerns when storms move in late Wednesday.

Officials urge people to clear debris from metal grates and basins of concrete slab drains.

Greenville city officials are also urging people to report ditches that are full of leaves.

Ditches on private properties are the owners' responsibility but the city asks residents to report debris alongside city streets to Public Works at 864-467-4335.

Read more storm water questions and answers from the city of Greenville [here](#).

All mountain counties and most Upstate counties are under a flash flood watch until Thursday morning.

Midlands waking up to rain Thursday

By Von Gaskin

[WISTV 10, NBC Columbia](#), Nov 19, 2015 6:55 AM EST

COLUMBIA, SC (WIS) - A strong cold front bringing severe weather to parts of the southeast is dumping rain on the Midlands Thursday morning.

Emergency crews were called to the St. Andrews Woods apartment complex at about 5:30 a.m., where a vehicle was submerged in water at Kay and Beatty Streets.

Despite the heavy rain that fell and left puddles throughout the area Thursday morning, Main and Whaley, which usually floods during rain, was passable as of 4:30 a.m.

But standing water and puddles have been reported on some roads, so drivers should use caution.

Tornado watches were issued for several counties Wednesday night but they expired without incident. A tornado touched down in the Atlanta area, according to the National Weather Service.

Tim Miller with the WIS First Alert Team says there's a 90% chance of rain in the Midlands through 7 a.m. Thursday.

"Look for all showers and rain to move out by noon with clearing skies," Miller said.

The greatest threat with any storms that develop will be lightning and gusty winds although an isolated tornado cannot be ruled out. Some downpours fell overnight.

The rain totals from this system will vary across the state. The Upstate could see 2 to 4 inches and there is a flash flood watch for that area until Thursday morning. In the central Midlands, expect between a half-inch to an inch and a half. In the Southern and Eastern Midlands, expect a half-inch to 2 inches.

Need another excuse to buy rare bourbon? How about a whiskey auction to help flood relief?

We'll drink to that

By Kinsey Gidick

[Charleston City Paper](#), Nov 18, 2015

As if brown water lovers needed any more encouragement to buy bourbon, here's one that's actually for a good cause. Beginning this morning, Bottles liquor store in Mt. Pleasant began their Rare Whiskey Auction, a sale of 12 bottles of whiskey with all of the proceeds benefitting Columbia flood victims through Central Carolina Community Foundation.

Travis Hartong, Bottles' whole sale manager, says he got the idea after seeing a similar fundraiser in Louisville, Ky. and knew it would be a hit in Charleston.

"Because of the way the bourbons are allocated to stores, people go crazy for them," he says. "We sell to a lot of restaurants and bars, but they get about 98 percent of the product, so we have to stash a few bottles to sell for retail which is really frustrating for customers."

The Rare Whiskey Auction gives whiskey lovers a chance to fight over the best of the best. So what's on the auction block? Of the 12 bottles, there's an 18 year old Elijah Craig Single Barrel, a Willett XCF 1.0 Rye Whiskey finished in Curacao Cask, a Michter's Barrel Strength Rye Single Barrel, not to mention Pappy van Winkle's 23 year old Bourbon that already has a bid of \$1,200.

That bid may sound bananas, but Hartong reminds people not to forget how hurt Columbia was by the storm. "There are still people trying to recover," he says.

Bottles' Rare Whiskey Auction runs through Dec. 11. To bid, click [here](#).

Williams Middle School students collect money for flood victims

[Florence Morning News/SCNOW.com](#), November 18, 2015

FLORENCE, S.C. – The Middle Years Program (International Baccalaureate) students at Williams Middle School collected money for flood victims and presented a check for \$1,000 to a representative from the American Red Cross.

"I am so excited about this outpouring of generosity," said Tonette Mack, Williams Middle School MYP teacher.

"When we returned to school after the flooding, I asked my students to respond to a journal topic, which required them to reflect on the events that had ravished our state. The majority of the students responded that we have a responsibility to reach out to those in need."

Students collecting food for needy

[Weekly Observer](#), November 18, 2015

KINGSTREE, S.C. – Three student groups at Williamsburg Technical College are collecting canned goods and nonperishables for local flood victims and the needy over the holiday season.

Practical Nursing students, Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society members, and participants in the WTC Student Government Association are collaborating to collect the goods to help The Ark in Kingstree provide for persons who are in need of such items. WTC employees are also involved in the collection. The public is also invited to participate in this drive.

Canned goods and nonperishables are to be delivered to the Practical Nursing Department lab in Building A on campus by today.

For more information, call 843-355-4130.

New York family aids Andrews flood victims

By Clayton Stairs

[South Strand News](#), November 18, 2015

When Teri Bania, a New York woman who is a part-time resident of Andrews, heard about the devastating flooding in Georgetown County, she decided to do something to help.

Bania opened a GoFundMe account to collect money from family and friends and, with help, collected a minivan full of clothes, cleaning supplies and more.

"When my friends in Andrews told me about it, I was so heartbroken," Bania said, "so I kept in touch to see what I could do."

Her 9-year-old daughter, Katrina, soon joined the cause by asking her fourth-grade teacher at Nageli Elementary School in Port Ewen, New York, to help. The whole school took part in a donation event for cleaning supplies.

"She was very concerned and felt we needed to help the people in the community who lost so much," Bania said. "She was really excited and proud to collect donations."

On Nov. 6, the Bania family – Katrina, Bania's 10-year-old son, Nicholas, and Bania's mother, Nancy Morretta – drove to Andrews to deliver the items they collected.

"My whole minivan was so filled with boxes, I had to squeeze my children in," Bania said. "We stayed for the weekend and delivered all the donations to churches in Andrews, including Andrews Church of God and Pinecrest Baptist Church."

She said although some of her neighbors had flood water in their homes, her house was spared because it is on a higher elevation.

However, she wants to continue helping people who lost their homes.

"It is a tragic thing, but the important thing is that nobody lost their lives," Bania said. "Everything can be replaced, but you can't replace life."

Scoppe: The link between state revenue projections and politicians' plans is ... missing

Cindi Ross Scoppe, Associate Editor

[The State \(Columbia\)](#), Nov. 18, 2015

Highlights

State budget officials project SC will have \$1.2 billion more to spend next year

That's a lot of money, but most of it is already obligated, even without accounting for new obligations

The idea that there's enough money to fix our roads, or cut our taxes — much less do both — is laughable

Columbia, SC--LAST WEEK, budget prognosticators projected that the state would have what politicians are calling an "extra" \$1.2 billion to spend next year.

That prompted Gov. Nikki Haley to declare, despite new and mounting financial obligations, that she will continue insisting on an already-unaffordable \$1.4 billion-per-year income tax cut “until they give me reason to go below that.”

Some Republican legislators said they’d keep pushing for a higher gas tax and a lower income tax. Others vowed to keep pushing for no tax increase and lower income taxes.

And Senate Democratic Leader Nikki Setzler rolled out a plan to borrow up to \$500 million to help pay for flood damage.

\$1.2 billion added to S.C. budget

I don’t mean to imply that the politicians’ proposals have any rational connection to the projections. Oh, they want you to think there is a relationship, but in fact what they are saying is wholly unhinged from the amount of money South Carolina might collect. Or the amount of money needed for those things the state needs to pay for. Or how high or low our taxes are.

In that sense, last week was like pretty much any other week in South Carolina: Politicians decide what our taxing and spending policies should be without regard to what they actually are.

Gov. Haley, for instance, has already been given more than enough reasons that we can’t afford to slash the top income tax rate to 5 percent from 7 percent. The biggest one: We’re not meeting the obligations we already have — much less new ones we might have no choice but to add. Slashing income taxes by \$1.4 billion a year is a particularly bad idea when you pair it with a \$400 million-per-year increase in the gas tax and try to sell it as a plan to fix our roads. It’s not. It’s a plan to slash our taxes.

Where is 7% less than 5%? Hint: It’s related to SC taxes

Contrary to what the governor implies, our income taxes are not high: Once you factor in the different starting points and exemptions, South Carolinians who pay those taxes actually pay on average just 3.1 percent of our income in state income taxes; that’s lower than what people pay in 32 states. Overall, according to the anti-tax Tax Foundation, South Carolinians pay 8.3 percent of our total income in state and local taxes, the ninth lowest rate in the nation.

New revenue

Now, let’s talk about that \$1.2 billion in new money. What legislators would have us believe is that it’s a windfall. That if our revenue goes up \$1.2 billion next year, then of course we can afford the governor’s tax cut, which would be phased in over two decades. That if our revenue goes up \$1.2 billion next year, then of course we can afford the \$1 billion a year needed to fix our roads.

The problem is that there’s no reason to believe tax revenues will go up \$1.2 billion every year. In fact, there is every reason to believe that they will not. In fact, there’s not really \$1.2 billion in new revenue projected; there’s about \$600 million more to spend next year than the \$7.5 billion legislators spent this year.

What the budget prognosticators said was that the amount of money the state collects in taxes will go up by \$560 million next year. That’s a lot of money, but it’s just half of the \$1.2 billion that isn’t really \$1.2 billion.

Latest SC roads plan still doesn’t add up

Another \$460 million in projected new revenue is one-time money, mostly the result of those same prognosticators underestimating how much money the state would collect last year and this year. That’s a lot of money too, but here’s the important point: It simply replaces the \$460 million in one-time money the state is spending this year. And it is money that no responsible person would spend to pay for ongoing obligations — like tax cuts or pay raises or new employees.

There is another \$210 million in new recurring revenue, but for tedious-to-explain reasons, it can’t be used in guessing how much we can expect revenue to grow each year.

Ongoing obligations

What the budget prognosticators did not say — because it’s not their job to say this — is that legislators would have to use all \$560 million of that new revenue, plus much of the other \$210 million in recurring funds, just to meet the obligations they already have made.

The biggest obligation is to public education, where they need to increase spending \$500 million just to close the gap between what state law requires them to spend on teacher salaries and other school operational costs and what they are spending this year. Now, no one expects them to close that gap; they have refused for years, while also refusing to change the law. But they will have to spend some of that amount — perhaps as much as half — just to maintain the status quo as the student population grows.

And that doesn’t include any additional funding to comply with a state Supreme Court order that legislators meet their constitutional duty to provide a decent education to all students, which legislative leaders consider one of their top priorities.

Dear Gov. Haley: There’s no free lunch, easy road fix or massive tax cut without pain

The other big obligation is \$129 million to keep providing the current level of Medicaid benefits. The cost is actually higher, but the state Medicaid agency says cost-saving measures will offset part of it.

State law also requires lawmakers to give cities and counties an additional \$82 million to help pay for those services that state law requires them to provide — another law everyone expects lawmakers to keep breaking.

In the not-required-but-promised category is \$33 million that the Department of Social Services says it needs to hire 157 more employees to protect vulnerable children and adults. And the money the Department of Health and Environmental Control says it needs so it can maybe inspect all those earthen dams and keep them from breaching and flooding our communities.

For his part, Mr. Setzler showed no signs of letting up on borrowing to pay for flood costs, despite the fact that projections showed we would have that \$460 million in one-time money — which is precisely the sort of money you ought to use to pay for one-time expenses ... such as those created by historic flooding.

Ms. Scoppe writes editorials and columns for The State. Reach her at cscoppe@thestate.com or (803) 771-8571 or follow her on Twitter @CindiScoppe.

Letter: Thanks for all the information during the ‘Great Flood’

[Manning Times/Manning Live](#), November 19, 2015

I want to thank the staff of your paper, The Manning Times, and especially your website, manninglive.com, for all you folks did for our community and surrounding areas during the historic Flood of 2015.

A lot of people, myself included, came to depend on y’all for most of our news as to the flooding, what areas were isolated and what bridges and highways were closed out, along with what weather to expect.

You guys kept us posted on which restaurants were open, where to buy food and which neighborhoods were out of power.

You worked closely with the Clarendon County Sheriff’s Office and Sheriff Randy Garrett, County Council Chairman Dwight Stewart, Manning Mayor Julia Nelson, Summerton Mayor Mac Bagnal, the S.C. National Guard, Gov. Nikki Haley and several more officials and government personnel, along with other elected officials, to keep us updated 24 hours a day.

No matter what time you checked, y’all were always changing and updating with the latest news that our community desperately needed. Then, after the storm was over and the flooding continued, we looked to you for information on FEMA, DSS, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army and for shelters where folks could get out of the devastation and have a place to rest and eat a decent meal, where they would feel safe and be safe.

We also were able to see where distribution points were for those needing supplies.

The Clarendon County community will always be in debt for what the staff at The Manning Times was able to do for us.

We have a ways to go, but it is nice to know we have you guys helping lead the way.

MOYE GRAHAM

Manning

TV/Radio Clips

Media Alert From TVEyes Media Monitoring Suite



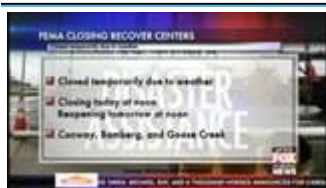
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[FEMA. on WFXB \(FOX\) - Myrtle Beach, SC](#)

11/18/2015 07:37:45

Fox Morning News (News)

... governor's office also testified. fema is temporarily closing some disaster recovery centers in south carolina over weather concerns one of those is in conway. ...



(click thumbnail to play)

[FEMA. on WFXB \(FOX\) - Myrtle Beach, SC](#)

11/18/2015 08:36:44

Fox Morning News (News)

... governor's office also testified. fema is temporarily closing some disaster recovery centers in south carolina over weather concerns one of those is in conway. ...



(click thumbnail to play)

[FEMA. on WBTW \(CBS\) - Myrtle Beach, SC](#)

11/18/2015 08:57:17

CBS This Morning (News)

... with a warrant. count on updates from news13.
fema is temporarily closing some disaster recovery centers in south carolina over weather concerns one of those is in conway. ...



(click thumbnail to play)

[FEMA. on WCBD-CHS \(NBC\) - Charleston, SC](#)

11/18/2015 11:10:44

News 2 Midday (News)

... be closing just about an hour from now at noon.
fema says the center in goose creek will reopen noon tomorrow. they are closing because of the threat of storms in the ...



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[FEMA. on WBTW \(CBS\) - Myrtle Beach, SC](#)

11/18/2015 12:05:57

News 13 at Noon (News)

... candidates... including incumbent paul brooks.
fema is temporarily closing some disaster recovery centers in south carolina over weather concerns one of those is in conway and it ...



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[FEMA on WOLO- COL \(ABC\) - Columbia, SC](#)

11/18/2015 12:37:43

ABC Columbia News at Noon (News)

... minutes. >> all right, jonathan. fema is temporarily closing several disaster recovery centers statewide due to those thunderstorms in the forecast, jonathan was just alluding to. ...



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[FEMA. on WMBF \(NBC\) - Myrtle Beach, SC](#)

11/18/2015 16:04:41

WMBF News at 4 (News)

... closed right now due to severe weather concerns...
fema says it plans for the center to reopen tomorrow at noon. if you need immediate help or ...



(click thumbnail to play)

[FEMA. on WCSC-CHS \(CBS\) - Charleston, SC](#)

11/18/2015 16:09:02

Live 5 News First at 4 (News)

... weather concerns. fema says it plans for the center to reopen tomorrow at noon. if you need ...



(click thumbnail to play)

[FEMA. on WIS - COL \(NBC\) - Columbia, SC](#)

11/18/2015 17:01:45

WIS News 10 Live at 5:00 (News)

... be spent on repairs - and from where it's coming.
fema has already approved funding for 75 percent of that cost -- but of course, that could still leave millions more for the city ...



(click thumbnail to play)

FEMA on WIS - COL (NBC) - Columbia, SC

11/18/2015 17:03:35

WIS News 10 Live at 5:00 (News)

... as we've said, the city is depending on reimbursement from fema and possibly from the state to cover most of the costs. assuming that happens, there's still a prospect that ...



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FEMA on WMBF (NBC) - Myrtle Beach, SC

11/18/2015 17:06:51

WMBF News at 5 (News)

... and because of the heavy rains coming through the area-- the fema disaster recovery center located in conway at the horry county government and justice center will be closed ...



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FEMA on WLTX - COL (CBS) - Columbia, SC

11/18/2015 17:35:46

News 19 Friends @ 5 (News)

... the city plants on fronting the money and hopes that fema will reimburse them at least 75%. the rest of the money will come in the ...



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FEMA. on WCSC-CHS (CBS) - Charleston, SC

11/18/2015 17:37:46

Live 5 News at 5:30 (News)

... these costs that aren't covered by fema into the budget- but that won't be ready until the end of the 2016 legislative ...



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FEMA on WIS - COL (NBC) - Columbia, SC

11/18/2015 18:02:49

WIS News 10 at 6:00 (News)

... to \$100 million. and that doesn't include about costs is something fema and the millions of dollars. people directly affected by this flood need to rebuild their ...



(click thumbnail to play)

FEMA on WLTX - COL (CBS) - Columbia, SC

11/18/2015 18:02:55

News 19 @ 6 (News)

... help from the federal government through fema, it's a critical time for state lawmakers to come up with their own plan for funding. ...



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FEMA on WLTX - COL (CBS) - Columbia, SC

11/18/2015 18:04:02

News 19 @ 6 (News)

... you only have two wokes left to apply for that fema assistance if you did suffer damage from the flood. the registration deadline is ...



(click thumbnail to play)

[FEMA on WIS - COL \(NBC\) - Columbia, SC](#)

11/18/2015 18:04:06

WIS News 10 at 6:00 (News)

... sewer system at 10 million. fema has already committed to covering 75% of the proposed cost. the city has asked the state for 100 percent ...



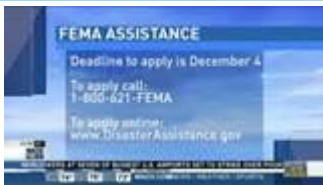
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[FEMA. on WIS - COL \(NBC\) - Columbia, SC](#)

11/18/2015 19:04:37

WIS News 10 7:00 Report (News)

... the deadline for flood victims to apply for help from fema is approaching. you have until december 4th. so far, more than 79- thousand people have applied. ...



(click thumbnail to play)

[FEMA. on WACH - COL \(FOX\) - Columbia, SC](#)

11/18/2015 22:06:25

WACH FOX News at 10 (News)

... money. that want this great counsel from asking fema for 100% of assistance. >>> we have a few weeks left for flood victims to apply for financial assistance from fema. ...



(click thumbnail to play)

[FEMA. on WTAT-CHS \(FOX\) - Charleston, SC](#)

11/18/2015 22:38:08

News at 10 (News)

... weather concerns. fema says it plans for the center to reopen tomorrow at noon. if you need ...



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[FEMA. on WMBF \(NBC\) - Myrtle Beach, SC](#)

11/18/2015 23:21:10

WMBF News at 11 (News)

... lawmakers will work some of these costs that fema won't coiver into the budget... but that won't be ready until the end of the 20-16 legislative session. ...



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[FEMA. on WCBD-CHS \(NBC\) - Charleston, SC](#)

11/19/2015 04:40:28

News 2 Today at 4:30AM (News)

... the deadline is approaching for historic flooding to register with fema. applications are due december fourth. that's the same day you must also have your applications in ...



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[FEMA on WIS - COL \(NBC\) - Columbia, SC](#)

11/19/2015 05:06:26

WIS News 10 Sunrise (News)

... baloon to around \$130 million dollars. fema has committed to covering 3-quarters of those costs, but there are still questions about the rest. ...



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FEMA. on WTOC-SAV (CBS) - Savannah, GA

11/19/2015 05:09:51

WTOC News at Daybreak 5A (News)

... and sewer repairs totaled 21 million. fema has already approved funding for 75 percent of that cost -- but that could still leave millions ...



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FEMA. on WCIV-CHS (ABC) - Charleston, SC

11/19/2015 05:10:07

Good Morning Charleston (News)

... department on myers road. jon) the deadline to apply for disaster assistance through fema is quickly approaching. since last month's flooding 16 thousand people in the tri-county area have ...



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FEMA on WCBD-CHS (NBC) - Charleston, SC

11/19/2015 05:11:59

News 2 Today (News)

... anyone affected by last month's historic flooding to register with fema. applications are due december 4. that is the same day you must also have your applications in to the small ...



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FEMA on WLTX - COL (CBS) - Columbia, SC

11/19/2015 06:03:00

News 19 @ 6am (News)

... the biggest bulk 100 million to fix the canal. leaders are asking fema to pay for the rapes. fema says it will likely pay 75% of the cost leaving the rest up ...



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FEMA on WACH - COL (FOX) - Columbia, SC

11/19/2015 06:04:07

WACH Fox Good Day (News)

... left for flood victims in the state to apply for financial assistance from fema. deadline is december 4th. you can apply by calling the number on your screen. you can also complete the ...



(click thumbnail to play)

FEMA on WIS - COL (NBC) - Columbia, SC

11/19/2015 06:06:27

WIS News 10 Sunrise (News)

... balloon to around \$130 million dollars. fema has committed to covering 3-quarters of those costs, but there are still questions about the rest. ...



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FEMA on WLTX - COL (CBS) - Columbia, SC

11/19/2015 06:06:37

News 19 @ 6am (News)

... >> all right. savannah, thank you. a reminder that the fema deadline is fast approaching. it's two weeks from tomorrow, december 4. we have all the information you ...



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[FEMA on WCBD-CHS \(NBC\) - Charleston, SC](#)

11/19/2015 06:13:05

News 2 Today (News)

... anyone affected by last month's historic flooding to register with fema. applications are viewed december 4. that's the same day you must also have your applicationsn tothe small ...



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[FEMA. on WLTX - COL \(CBS\) - Columbia, SC](#)

11/19/2015 06:51:17

News 19 @ 6am (News)

... the city has paid about \$10 million, but leaders asking fema to pay for the canal repairs. fema says it may pay 75% of the cost leaving the rest up to the city. ...