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Rain-swollen state rivers prompt new evacuations

BY BRUCE SMITH
Associated Press

PLEASANT HILL — A number of South Carolina residents near the coast are evacuating and others are piling up sandbags anew outside homes and businesses, bracing for more possible flooding.

Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson planned to travel to Columbia and Charleston last Friday to meet with federal, state and local officials and see the recovery efforts firsthand from what South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley has described as a 1,000-year rainstorm. While skies are clear again after past days of rain, residents along or near the coast are readying as rain-swollen rivers reach the sea.

Members of the South Carolina National Guard, stationed at a fire station in the rural hamlet of Pleasant Hill about 30 minutes from Georgetown, were busy Thursday helping people get to shelters from areas still cut off by road flooding. In some areas, flooding is expected to worsen in coming days and Georgetown, which fronts a coastal bay fed by a series of rivers, is especially watchful.

Guardsmen Michael Sanders, 21, and Michael Dunmore, 19, manned a Light Medium Tactical Vehicle, a truck with high clearance and a sealed engine that can easily move through 4 feet of water. The back was covered with canvas and outfitted with seats or those being evacuated out

of the areas still threatened by floodwaters. The two are among some 2,800 Guard members called up to help deal with the flooding.

An Associated Press reporter rode along while the truck easily forded several feet of water on a rural road to reach a man seeking shelter. No sooner had the man been dropped off where a bus would take him to Georgetown than the guardsmen, guided by a local fire lieutenant, drove to a nearby hamlet where a woman and three young children also needed to be ferried out.

"This is the most water I have ever seen," Sanders said. "There is water running across the roads and there is water in yards, some worse than the others."

Sanders was in Columbia, the hard-hit state capital, when he was called to the coast for disaster response work. He said it took 7 hours to drive from Columbia to Georgetown because of the flooding along the way. Normally, the stretch is a 2.5-hour drive.

"It's a unique situation. All we can do is the best we can," Dunmore said.

Some motorists honked in greeting and people standing by the road waved as the heavy truck wound down the back roads not far from the Black River.

There was no water immediately threatening the homes of the people evacuated on Thursday. But several homes were isolated because of road flooding in other areas — flooding that Haley warned could get worse.

The governor on Thursday urged those in low-lying areas near the coast to "strongly consider evacuating" before floodwaters sweeping down river reach those areas.

"We have thousands of people that won't move. And we need to get them to move," she said. "They don't need to be sitting in flooded areas for 12 days."

Officials say there were no mandatory evacuations but people need to be alert.

"We want people to be hyper-vigilant," said South Carolina National Guard commander Maj. Gen. Robert Livingston, adding some had become "complacent" in recent days.

In Georgetown, where floodwaters ran a foot or more deep over the weekend, merchants were again placing sand bags by doors and on the sidewalk next to businesses.

In the state capitol of Columbia, work is still under way to repair the city's water system that serves 375,000 customers after that city was hit hard by the rains. A canal that serves as the main source of drinking water for about half those customers collapsed in two places following historic rainfall. Contractors built a rock dam to plug the holes while National Guard helicopters dropped giant sandbags into the rushing water.

Water from the canal feeds the reservoir at the city's water treatment plant. With the levels in the canal falling, pumps are helping get water from the canal into the reservoir.

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Assessment of initial storm response

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"If it ever floods in McBee, S.C., we would be well-advised to gather up the animal pairs for future breeding and figure out what a cubit is." - Well-traveled and well-read resident of McBee commenting on the recent heavy rains that resulted in 16 of South Carolina's 46 counties being designated federal disaster areas, making individuals and businesses in those counties eligible to receive federal taxpayer revenue.

Due to area terrain, soil composition, its water shed and drainage of rivers and creeks, Chesterfield County came out relatively unscathed from record-setting rains earlier this month. However, I would not go so far as to call it a "1000-year flood," as does Gov. Nikki Haley if, for no other reason, accurate records go back only about 140 years.

Locally, the Pee Dee River at the Cheraw station crested at about 36 feet, which is considered moderate flood stage. That is the highest water level since it reached 37 feet, 6 inches in 2010. The highest crest in recorded history, which began in 1875 for the Pee Dee River in Cheraw, occurred in 1945 when the high water mark reached 50 feet, 5 inches.

However, Haley can be easily forgiven for this bit of hyperbole because she, along with the rest of her senior leadership team, notably S.C. Army National Guard Adjutant Gen. Bob Livingston, SCDOT Acting Director Christy Hall, and Public Safety Director Leroy

Jones, responded quickly with the right measures to optimize public safety.

Livingston and a good many of his staff and troops were tested in the cauldron of Afghanistan and Iraq. That experience in command and control, in addition to maintaining logistical lines in an austere combat environment.

reaped huge dividends the past two weeks.

Haley got in front of the storm by being proactive rather than reactive, in addition to devising a strategy with her senior leadership. Then, they got out of the way and let their managers and supervisors implement those procedures that saw successful fruition by the efforts of thousands of public employees working 12-hour shifts in hazardous conditions to accomplish the mission - the safety and welfare of the people in the state.

The successful strategy included timely notifications using all forms of media, curfews, designated evacuation routes and shelters, food and water distribution points, and opportune repair of basic infrastructure. Equally important, the senior and junior leadership did not micro-manage their people, which is a recipe for disaster, especially in a mammoth logistical undertaking such as a response to a widespread natural disaster.

And, in direct contrast to New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, in addition to last year's protests in Ferguson and this year's protests in Baltimore, there has been no reported looting

or other thuggery. Well done to our citizens and law enforcement.

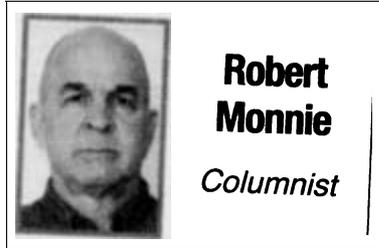
Kudos also go out to the Chesterfield County public works department under the leadership of Tim Eubanks. In less than a week after the recent heavy rains abated, these selfless county employees repaired scores of miles of dirt roads eroded and otherwise damaged by the storm.

In the private sector, Nestle Waters donated four tractor-trailer loads of bottled water (165,000 bottles) to South Carolina areas in need, while our county's faith-based community, local individuals and organizations transported 115,000 bottles donated from Nestle, to areas in need.

Without any help from the government, this largesse from the private sector, churches, individuals and organizations totaled about 280,000 pint-sized bottles of water. Putting it in terms of human survival, based on a liberal daily drinking of one gallon, this amount of water will keep 1400 people, the population of the town of Chesterfield, alive for 25 days. Please keep in mind that people have priority over pets, while anyone can bathe out of a rain barrel.

At any rate, continue the mission while we wait and see if once the federal government opens our purse strings for South Carolina infrastructure damaged by the storm, the Feds get out of the way and allow state and local officials decide when and how to fix it.





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The United Way of South Carolina is asking for volunteers THE NEWS - Wednesday, October 14, 2015 - 19

The United Way of South Carolina is asking for volunteers across the state who can help victims clean debris from their flood-stricken homes and sort the debris at the curb. United Way requests that volunteers register here: getconnected.uwasc.org/drm

"What we've seen over the last week is the very best in so many people across our state - neighbors helping neighbors is what South Carolina does best," said Governor Nikki Haley.

"Team South Carolina is motivated, and that's a blessing, but what we need as we

start the long process of cleaning up is volunteers. Whatever

time you can give makes a difference."

"It is going to be hard, the work of recovery," said Timothy Ervolina, president and chief executive officer of United Way of South Carolina, noting how hard and how long a job this will be.

"After the news has moved on and nobody is talking about

the 1,000-year flood anymore, United Way will still be here in South Carolina. We will still be working hard to rebuild communities and lives. That's what we do."

Debris removal workers are asking homeowners to separate

the debris into six categories to speed the removal process: household garbage, construction debris, vegetation, household hazardous waste, electronics, and appliances (white goods).

Debris removal will occur for the next several months, and volunteers can help by putting together Flood Buckets for survivors.

- 5 gallon bucket
- Sponges and scrub brushes
- Heavy duty gloves
- Retractable utility knife
- Mold control spray
- Bleach and disinfectant

Other items: http://s3.amazonaws.com/churchplant-media-cms/first_baptist_church_fort_mill_fort_mill_sc/flood-buckets-instructions.pdf

To find where to drop off the Flood Buckets, call the

S.C. Baptist Convention Relief Center at (803) 227-6031.

Other organizations are coordinating activities to collect items of need.

The S.C. Conference of the United Methodist Church is delivering health and school supply kits throughout the community.

The S.C. Baptist Convention has also developed a disaster relief mud-out training video with basic procedures for safely and effectively cleaning debris: <http://www.scbaptist.org/resources/video-library/disaster-relief---mud-out-training/156/>

Survivors of the 1,000-year-flood who need help should register as soon as possible with the Federal Emergency Management Agency at 1-800-261-FEMA (1-800-261-3362). Flood survivors are also encouraged to call 211 to register with the United Way of South Carolina.

They can help survivors find the best resources in their local community.





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Reopening of southbound lanes on I-95 a move toward normalcy

BY TIM SMITH
The Greenville News

COLUMBIA — Southbound lanes of Interstate 95 have reopened, one of the most visible signs of the state's recovery and a move toward normalcy after historic rains that spread flooding and damage from the coast to the Midlands.

Gov. Nikki Haley said Monday that no more flood-related deaths have been reported and the state is now in a recovery mode.

"We're moving. We're in gear," the governor said. "Everybody is ready. This is not going to take us years to come out of this."

Some normalcy returned to Columbia as well. A majority of Columbia's water customers, who had been under boil advisories for a week, are now able to use their taps. Curfews also were lifted Monday in the city and Richland County as law enforcement officials said they had no curfew violations Sunday night.

"I'm smiling big today," Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott said. "Things are

getting back to normal."

The southbound lanes of I-95 opened Monday morning after repairs were completed on 18 bridges that had kept much of a 70-mile stretch of the highway in South Carolina closed to through traffic for more than a week. There was a possibility of reopening northbound lanes Monday night following underwater inspection of the repaired areas.

A portion of the interstate, which at points sees as many as 30,000 cars per day, was closed Oct. 4 from Florence to I-26 as a result of historic flooding that damaged some of the bridges crossing the Pocatigo and Black rivers, and the Tearcoat Branch in a 13-mile span of the highway.

Haley last week said there were 33 "areas of concern" on the bridges that had to be addressed before they could reopen. Department of Transportation officials made the repairs a priority and said a contractor was told to work night and day until the repairs were complete.

The work has involved placing 200 truckloads of concrete around bridge foundations, Haley said, with another 70 needed to complete the northbound bridges.

The I-95 reopening comes as the total number of road and bridge closures statewide from the flooding dropped Monday morning to 309, according to DOT. That number includes 95 bridges and 214 roads. At one time more than 500 roads and bridges were closed from the flooding.

The flooding has claimed 19 lives, displaced communities, destroyed businesses and caused an estimated \$300 million in damages to farmlands.

Haley said 27 boil advisories remain in effect for 355,000 people, including 73,000 in Columbia.

She said 27 dams, both regulated and unregulated, have failed, and 247 are being watched. Haley said federal disaster recovery centers have opened in the state, and 23 teams from the Federal Emergency Management Agency are at work in 15 counties.





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To date, she said, 31,052 people have registered with FEMA, the first step in obtaining federal assistance. She said \$13.2 million in federal payments have been approved.

Haley said teams are being organized to go into affected areas with insurance specialists, mental health professionals and others. She said she also wants to focus support for small businesses damaged by the flood.

The governor said it is too early to estimate financial damage from the floods, saying assessment teams are at work statewide.

She also said she may not know for weeks whether there is any need to call lawmakers into a special session to address the disaster.

Haley urged counties and cities in the affected areas to ask for DOT to do debris removal so that a uniform system can be developed statewide. She said to date only a handful of areas have agreed to allow DOT to remove storm-related debris.

DOT began picking up that debris Monday in five of the hardest hit areas: the Andrews area in Georgetown County, the Socastee and Longs areas in Horry County, Cainbrook Drive

in Lexington County, Forest Acres outside Columbia and the Sumter area.

Contractors hired by DOT for debris removal are prioritizing areas based on those that can be safely accessed, according to DOT. Residents of affected counties that can safely do so are asked to place any storm-generated debris on the public right of way. Residents should not place debris on the right of way if they have or will receive insurance funding to privately dispose of household debris covered by their insurance policy, according to DOT.



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The goal of the College Application Day

From staff reports

148 South Carolina turns to recovery

The Associated Press

CHAPIN — As the worst of the floodwaters that roared through South Carolina washed out to sea, Gov. Nikki Haley and other officials said Monday it is time to start recovering instead of reacting to the ongoing emergency.

Workers reopened the entire stretch of Interstate 95 southbound Monday, making it the first time in eight days that traffic on the major highway link from Florida to the Northeast didn't take a two-hour detour. Crews hope the northbound lanes would soon follow.

Again on Monday, Haley refused to speculate how much damage in dollars the massive floods that started Oct. 2 have caused and how the state might pay to fix it. But she promised to rebuild.

"This is not going to take us years to get out of this," the governor said.

Haley also thanked volunteers, law enforcement and other workers for their times. Those help-

ing included people like Bob Kuenzli, who usually works as a police officer at a school in Chapin, but while school was cancelled last week, put on a South Carolina State Guard uniform and was assigned to help at a Columbia food bank.

Kuenzli, 68, was directing traffic Friday when a food bank volunteer, 72-year-old Charles Kauffman, became irritated that Kuenzli was letting truck traffic move and stopping other cars.

"Out of the corner of my eye, I saw him coming my way," Kuenzli told reporters Monday. "He sped up and threw me. ... I got thrown to the ground."

An angry Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott made sure Kauffman was charged with attempted murder.

Kauffman's lawyer said at his bond appearance Sunday that he has apologized to Kuenzli and is taking medication after suffering two recent strokes. Kauffman's bond

was set at \$75,000 and he was put under house arrest after being released from jail. There was no answer Monday at a phone number listed for him, and his attorney did not immediately return a message.

Kuenzli broke a bone in his wrist. But the Air Force veteran from the Vietnam War was ready to go back and volunteer as soon as he could.

Thousands of other people in South Carolina have also been working long hours, including crews continuing to fix a breach in the canal that supplies Columbia drinking water. Reserve tanks had been refilled and the city hopes to get all 375,000 of its customers off a boil water advisory soon. The South Carolina State Fair in Columbia was on schedule to start Wednesday in Columbia, and Lott said his deputies could handle traffic and security for the University of South Carolina's football game scheduled for Saturday.



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148 + 59 Stop shortchanging South Carolina

South Carolinians have to get over the cheapskate model of democracy. To do otherwise is to continue to fail our future.

Billions of dollars of underinvestment in roads, bridges and health care over recent years leaves the state at the mercy of disasters of one sort or another.

Just witness the 6 trillion gallons of rain over the past week that flooded rivers, burst dams, destroyed homes, upended lives and killed at least 17 people.

If there ever is a teaching moment for state legislators, the flood illustrates how South Carolina must invest in its infrastructure and people. To do otherwise is to sentence our children to a future that mimics a continuing past of dysfunction and misery.

The state's record in recent years is embarrassing:

» **Roads.** State lawmakers started 2015 knowing that South Carolina has more than \$40 billion in road and bridge maintenance needs over the next 25 years. Various plans were drafted and discussed about investing in infrastructure needs, but they got caught in the continuing babble of politics and bickering, despite the fact that a broad majority wants to raise taxes — yes, raise taxes — to pay the piper. But nothing was done. As a result, there's no new revenue stream now to help pay for the mess caused by the flood.

» **Education.** State lawmakers have underfunded public schools by \$3 billion over the past seven years by not following state law to fund education at established per-pupil levels. Such cuts rob students of their futures and create what one analyst has called a permanent underclass that will continue until the state is willing to dig itself out of the problem. More troubling: Even with a court-ordered deadline to come up with a legislative solution to create a more equitable education funding system, legislators are complaining about the deadline, not worrying about the problem.

» **Health care.** State lawmakers continue to refuse billions of dollars of federal aid to expand Medicaid funding to provide access to "Obamacare" for 200,000 poor citizens who don't make enough

money to get federal subsidies. Refusing federal aid for the flood of health problems among the state's poor makes absolutely no sense when contrasted against televised coverage of Gov. Nikki Haley with her hand out to the federal government, ecstatic for federal flood aid.

South Carolina's leaders seem to have missed the lesson at school about the common good: that the state has a broad responsibility to provide for the general welfare of all people by setting policies that benefit society as a whole. This fundamental idea that stretches to Aristotle is a bulwark of democracy, a guiding principle in our Constitution that should trump selfish, political sorties designed to maximize the private good for individuals and corporations.

"The common good is the basis for democracy, and sustaining the common good is the basis for sustaining democracy," the Riley Institute's Don Gordon observed this week. "The founding fathers knew that."

For too long, the leaders of this state have been cutting government services and cutting revenue streams to fund remaining services in a third-rate, banana-republic drama to realize the Norquistian dream of shrinking government to a size that it can drown in a bathtub.

But as South Carolinians realized this week when flood waters rose to unprecedented levels, government has a vital role in keeping our society civil.

Thank goodness for first responders, police, firefighters and others who are steering rescue and recovery operations. They are from the government.

Thank goodness for federal aid — the same kind of "common good" aid that most of South Carolina's congressional delegation voted against after Hurricane Sandy. That help is fueled by a little bit of money that all of us pay toward the common good and make sure money is available for help when it's needed.

Let's pray we never need a natural disaster like the Great Flood of 2015 to remind state leaders of their responsibilities of looking out for the long-term common good by investing in infrastructure, education and





health care. There's no education in the second kick of a mule.

Andy Brack is editor and publisher of Statehouse Report. He can be reached at brack@statehousereport.com.



Andy Brack
Statehouse Report

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Thad Wimberly (left) and Jonathan Berry inspect the damage to a field of peanuts Friday after record rainfall and flooding in Branchville. Wimberly, co-owner of Wimco Farms in Branchville, said he expects to lose 75 percent of his crop. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SC farmers look at devastating losses as flood rolls downstream

The Associated Press

BRANCHVILLE — Thad Wimberly tugs on a clump of peanuts, shaking off the mud as he cracks the soggy shells to inspect his crop. But all he can do is sigh as his livelihood disintegrates between his fingers.

Just a week ago, the 2,500 acres Wimberly farms with his partner, Jonathan Berry, baked in a drought that wiped out his corn crop.

Now, his fields 60 miles south of Columbia in Branchville are filled with water. Moisture is trapped in his peanuts, creating mold and other toxins that make them unfit for humans and animals to eat.

He expects to lose as much as \$1 million this year, as crop insurance only covers a portion of market prices. It paid out only about \$120 an acre for his corn, which he estimated he could have sold for \$300 to \$400 per acre.

"That's the life of a farmer. You put your heart and soul into the ground, then something devastating happens like this and you are done," Wimberly said. "Farming is gam-

bling."

Across South Carolina, the misery continues: Preliminary estimates show crop losses could total more than \$300 million in the state's \$3 billion-a-year agriculture industry. Interstate 95, vital to the East Coast economy for trucking, remains closed over a stretch of 13 miles, forcing travelers to take a massive detour.

And even more rain could be on the way. A storm system will stall near the coast this weekend, bringing as much as an additional inch of rain to some areas, according to the National Weather Service.

The heaviest rain is expected today, although forecasters said it shouldn't be enough to flood any additional areas.

"Underneath that water is the South Carolina we remember. Underneath that water is that state that is so beautiful — that is damaged, but we have to fix it," said Gov. Nikki Haley, who warned that any final damage estimates could still be weeks away. "We'll get there."

Floodwaters continue to move toward the sea, although authorities don't expect the

devastating damage that happened in Columbia when up to 20 inches of rain fell over two days last weekend.

Haley continued to urge people in Georgetown County and other coastal areas to be vigilant. No one has had to be evacuated yet, though, and there was some hope the worst could be over.

The Waccamaw River has crested and the Black River is near crest, Georgetown County Administrator Sel Hemingway said Friday afternoon.

It will take days or maybe more than a week for the rivers to go below flood stage, but the water should start dropping.

"Crested" — I've been waiting for that word to be expressed here for a week," Hemingway said.

It isn't just South Carolina residents who are inconvenienced. The foundations under some of the 18 small bridges that crisscross two rivers and swamps on a 13-mile closed stretch of Interstate 95 have been washed away and must be repaired before the highway can be re-opened, South Carolina Department





of Transportation Secretary Christy Hall said Friday.

A contractor will begin working on the bridges 24 hours a day starting Saturday, said Hall, who had no estimate when the road, which carries 30,000 vehicles a day, could reopen. In the meantime, travelers who would normally drive 74 miles between Interstate 26 to Interstate 20 must take a 168-mile detour through Columbia.

For farmers, the worst of the flood damage was in low lying fields that spent days in stand-

ing water, hitting peanuts, cotton and soybeans especially hard, Agriculture Commissioner Hugh Weathers said. However, those crops account for a small percentage of what's grown across the U.S. And the state's top agriculture products — timber and poultry — took less of a hit, so national supplies shouldn't be too severely affected.

Weathers promised to seek federal aid for farmers.

Back in Branchville, Wimberly and Berry have lost up to 75 percent of their peanuts, cot-

ton and soybeans.

The tractors and combines at Wimco Farms sit idle, unable to get out into the swampy fields.

The only thing in abundance is anxiety, the hope that some assistance will ease the sting.

"We might not have a foot of water standing out here, but this is worse," he said. "It's not only the farm, or the money part of it, it takes a toll on your life. The stress. You're worrying about trying to make your bills, you worry about making sure your family is taken care of."

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Calhoun Falls Chamber banquet

Gagnon brings note of hope to Calhoun Falls audience

By Henry E. Green

With a new logo and a new anticipation of better things to come, Calhoun Falls Chamber of Commerce held its annual banquet at the Calhoun Falls Civic Center on Tuesday, Oct. 6.

State Rep. Craig Gagnon, who represents State House District 11 in the General Assembly, praised Governor Nikki Haley for her efforts to bring industry to South Carolina.

"We have a pro-business Governor," he said.

The state has been able to attract some big names in the world of industry, according to Gagnon.

"The Governor has done a great job in securing businesses," he said.

Gagnon provided a report on what the General Assembly accomplished during the past legislative session.

South Carolina leads the nation in domestic violence, the General Assembly toughened laws concerning that problem.

The legislature increased the budget for state public charter schools by \$12 million. Calhoun Falls is home to Calhoun Falls Charter School.

The legislature also increased the base student cost for public school students by \$100.

In the realm of education,

the Read to Succeed legislation which the General Assembly has passed seeks to ensure that students are proficient in reading.

The legislation recognizes that a student who does not read at grade level by the time he leaves the third grade he is at risk for not graduating from high school.

Other changes included that of the South Carolina Adjutant General. In the past, South Carolina was the only state in the nation where the adjutant general was elected.

Now the Adjutant General, who heads the National Guard in South Carolina, will be appointed, and will be responsible to the Governor.

One happy piece of news was that the state gave \$216 million to the various counties for maintenance of certain roads. Abbeville County received approximately \$ 2.6 million.

The General Assembly also tackled such issues as ethics reform. "We want to make sure what we do is transparent," said Gagnon.

The legislator noted that he helped spearhead a bill providing for in-state tuition for military personnel stationed here.

He commended in addition the hard work of local

people trying to move Abbeville County forward in various ways--such as developing the potential of Lake Russell.

The economy has faced a number of challenges, with the Great Recession causing hardships. "I'm hopeful that we will come back," he said.

Gagnon has lived in Abbeville since the mid-1980s, and he was first elected to the General Assembly in 2012. He and his wife Robin live on Church Street in Abbeville.

In other matters, the Calhoun Falls Chamber unveiled a new logo, depicting a handshake. The audience also heard encouraging words from Wilder Ferreira of Clemson, who is working with the Freshwater Coast Community Foundation to develop business initiatives here in Abbeville County.

Ferreira, who is originally from Brazil, is helping spearhead a series of classes on leadership and business at the Clemson Extension building in Abbeville.

Calhoun Falls Chamber president Chris Cowan, who served as master of ceremonies for the dinner, added a hopeful word in closing.

"Change is coming," he said.

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McCormick EMS weekend busy with downed trees and flooding

By Bob Stockton

Like all S.C. emergency management departments, McCormick County's EMS personnel had a very busy weekend last Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

"We began our preparedness activities last Wednesday," said Chris Doolittle, director of McCormick County's Emergency Services. "We monitored approaching weather and county preparedness.

"We continued that activity Thursday, then went to operations condition four. We briefed all county leadership and staff at 3 p.m. Friday and put our emergency operations center into place," Doolittle said.

The briefing included virtually all county organizations that might be called on during an emergency: county leadership, sheriff, water and sewer departments; fire and town police departments; Red Cross; S.C. Departments of Transportation and Natural Resources, and the county's assessor's office.

"The county assessor's office handles local damage assessment," Doolittle explained. S.C. Governor Haley mobilized state resources on Friday, and that included state law enforcement.

Doolittle's staff moved up to operations condition one, eminent and occurring conditions, a watch and readiness state on Saturday. "We called staff in and began handling issues," he said.

The issues included downed trees and branches on roads and houses and some low lying flooding on highway 823 and St. Paul's Church and continued into Sunday.

"Visibility was poor, and people were literally running their cars into and under downed trees and branches," said Doolittle. "We tried to mark them with our emergency vehicles, our private vehicles and barricades and cones."

The department made several code red calls to citizens telephones throughout the weekend and encouraged people to stay indoors at home. Sunday services at churches in town were cancelled. By Sunday afternoon, Doolittle said that the majority of work had been done, and he began releasing staff.

Just to show that not everyone looked at the situation as a disaster, Doolittle shared this: "We had some folks come up to McCormick Sunday to go white water rafting in Stevens Creek. We discouraged that."

McCormick schools delayed Monday morning openings two hours.

"We had another one-half inch of rain on Monday and stayed in a watch and readiness state," he said. "We are very, very happy with the way everything went. McCormick citizens should be very proud of its emergency management staff."

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This photo was taken of Stevens Creek in Parksville on Sunday. As of press time the water level had dropped below flood stage. Roads in McCormick County closed due to flooding are West Charleston Rd. S-38, Iron Bridge Rd., and St. Paul Church Rd. -Ashley Creswell photo

Locals helping with flood recovery/relief effort

United Way 'flooded' with bottles of water

Gregory A. Summers

gsummers

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Lancaster County has a reputation across the state as a giving place where folks come to the aid of neighbors. As the cleanup begins

from last weekend's historic floods, community organizations, business and individuals are teaming up independently to raise much-needed supplies for the victims.

With fresh water needed across the Midlands, the United Way of Lancaster County is collecting bottled water from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. today, Oct. 9, in the parking lot of its office, 109 S. Wylie St. All of the water collected will be sent to the American Red Cross in Columbia.

The "water drive" actually started Thursday, Oct. 8, but

so much has come in that alternate plans are in the works.

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GREGORY A. SUMMERS

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Lancaster County Water & Sewer District employees David Knight, left, and Chuck Gainey, load pallets of water on a trailer truck at the United Way of Lancaster parking lot on Wylie Street. The agency is collecting drinking water to help with flood recovery in the Midlands of the state.



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Relief

>>FROM 1A

"We have gotten much more than we anticipated," said Melanie Outlaw, executive director for United Way of Lancaster County. "We figured folks would bring in cases, but they are bringing in pallets. It's going very well in a chaotic kind of way."

The United Way has also set up a flood disaster relief fund for the Midlands, which were heavy hit by rainfall. A daily record was set Sunday, Oct. 6, in Columbia when 6.57 inches of rain were recorded at Columbia Metropolitan Airport.

Up to 18 inches of rainfall were recording in the Midlands between Friday, Oct. 4, and Sunday.

All funds donated to the fund will go directly to supporting flood recovery efforts.

ArrowPointe Federal Credit Union, 100 Monroe Highway, is collecting canned goods and cleaning supplies, as well as bottled water from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. today.

Felicia Pope, ArrowPointe's marketing director, said this part of the state was fortunate in that it was not hit as hard.

The items collected will be transported to Safe Federal Credit Union

in Columbia for distribution.

"Credit unions are founded on people helping people," she said. "There's no better time than right now to show people how much we care."

If you can't get by either location, before 5 p.m. today, there is another option.

As part of a statewide effort, the Sons of Confederate Veterans is collecting bottled water, bleach or disinfecting cleaners, paper towels, bathroom tissue and disposable diapers for flood victims in Lexington and Richland counties. The local collection point is the parking lot of Captain's Galley, 1305 S.C. Bypass West. Collection times are 4 to 6 p.m., today, Oct. 9; 2 to 6 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 10; and 3 to 5 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 11.

"We got word from the Wade Hampton camp in Columbia about what was needed and just want to meet those needs," said Leland Summers, state SCV commander. "We're trying to step up and help people."

Adults aren't the only ones stepping up. Ryker Robinson Jr., 10, a Kenaki Karate Association student is collecting donations and bottled water, as well as clothes to meet the community service component of his black

belt apprenticeship. The donations will be given to the American Red Cross. Drop-off points are Kenaki Karate, 1905 U.S. 521 Bypass, 9940 Charlotte Highway (Indian Land) and 148 Gadsden St. (Chester).

Ryker's family delivered a handwritten letter to the Lancaster News on Tuesday, Oct. 6.

"Some people have no shelter or food to eat," the McDonald Green Elementary School student wrote in his letter. "If this happened to my family, I would feel sad. Please help me achieve my goal of collecting items to help the flood victims. No donation is too small because this could have easily happened to us."

Flint Ridge Baptist Church, 1850 Flint Ridge Church Road, Heath Springs, is also collecting water and monetary donations. One trailer truckload has already been delivered and another one is headed out today.

Haley urges evacuation

While floodwaters may be slightly receding in the Upstate and Midlands, the worst isn't over with. Across the state, heavy rains have caused 18 dams to breach or fail. Since severe flooding be-

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gan last weekend, at least 16 deaths have been reported, including two deaths in North Carolina.

About lunchtime Thursday S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley urged residents of Georgetown, Jamestown, Givens Ferry and other coastal areas to evacuate ahead of flooding as storm waters flow down swollen rivers toward the coast.

"Our No. 1 goal is to convince those people to get out of their homes and to not see this as a hurricane, but to see this as a flood and a flood that doesn't go away overnight," she said, noting that standing water

could last more than two weeks.

The State newspaper reported Thursday the number of people slept in Richland County shelters dropped to 203 Wednesday night, Oct. 7.

However, Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott said the midnight to 6 a.m. curfew is extended through Sunday, Oct. 11.

Editor's note: We realize that other collection and donations efforts have been launched across the county to help with flood recovery. These are the only ones we definitely know about at press time.

Contact copy editor Greg Summers at (803) 283-1156

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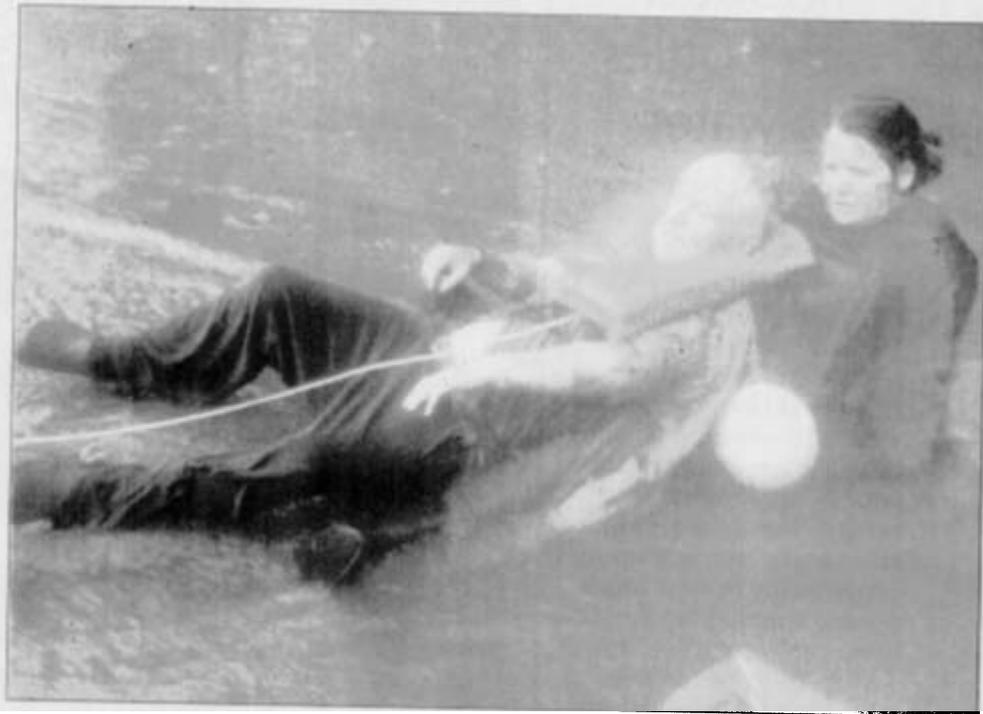


PHOTO SUPPLIED

Julie Hall, a 6th Circuit deputy assistant solicitor, her husband, Tom Hall, and their son, Brice Hall, rescued Canadian resident George Osterhues, 87, and his dog, Tila, in Columbia on Sunday, Oct. 4. Osterhues' car became trapped in water when he made an exit off of I-77. The Halls, who lived nearby, were checking on neighbors when they spotted Osterhues' partially submerged vehicle. The 6th Circuit covers Chester, Fairfield and Lancaster counties.





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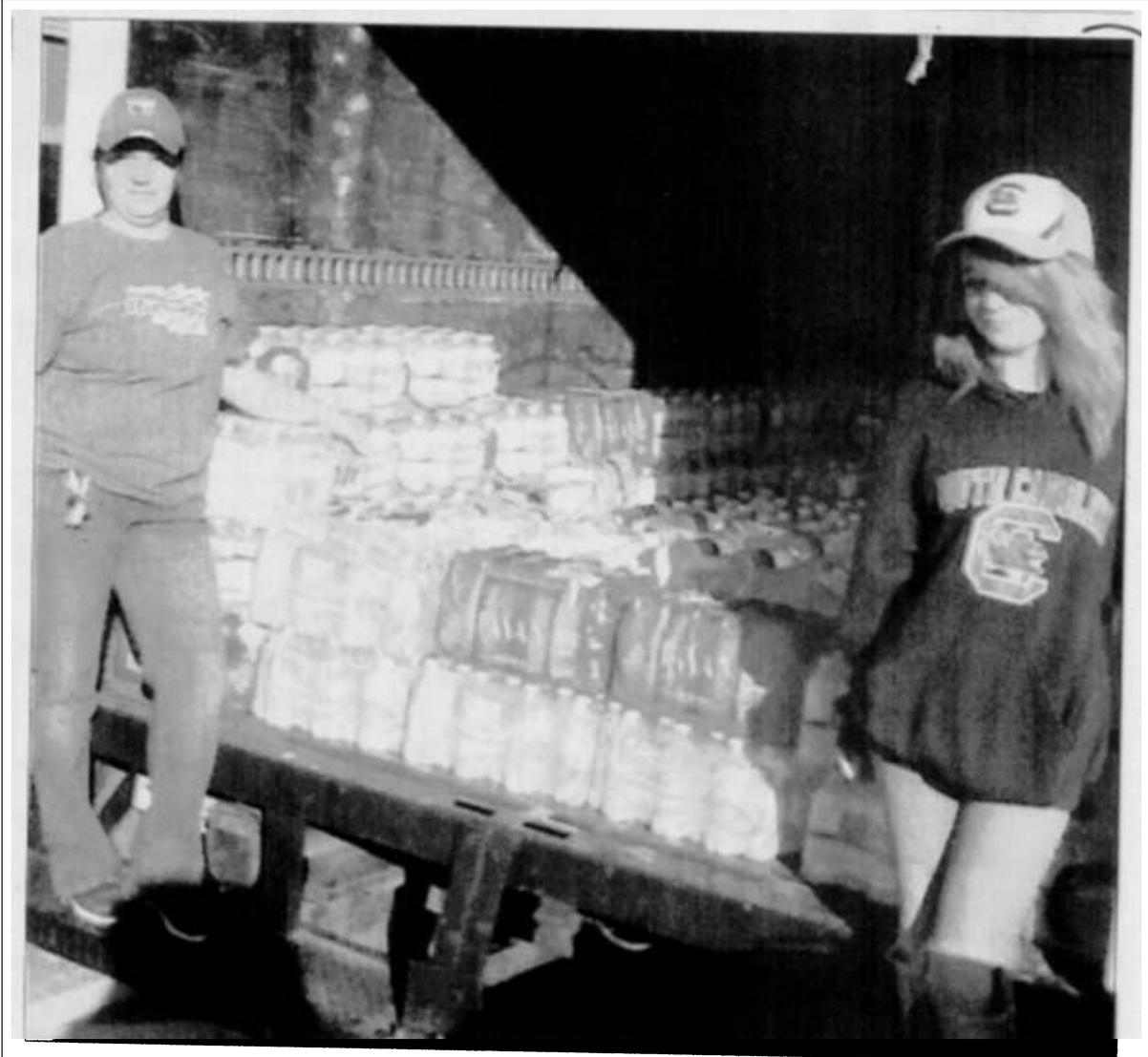


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Deah Stogner, left, and daughter Abbey Stogner, 14, began their water collection with emails to art students at Chastain's Studio Lofts. They raised enough money to buy all of the water Big Lots had in stock, then loaded more than 300 gallons of water into a donated box truck for delivery to the American Red Cross in Columbia Thursday, Oct. 8.





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Melanie Outlaw, United Way of Lancaster County executive director, shrink wraps a pallet of drinking water in the UW parking lot before it is loaded on a trailer truck. As of 4 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 8, the agency had recieved more than 12 pallets of donated water.