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To:
Date: 2/11/2016 8:26:30 AM
Subject: Morning Clips – Thursday, February 11, 2016

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

Wall Street Journal: Coveted Endorsements Up for Grabs in South Carolina

Gov. Nikki Haley's aides haven't said whether she'll back a candidate; Rep. Mulvaney: 'I don't even know who I'm voting for'

<http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2016/02/11/nikki-haley-other-top-s-c-politicians-remain-neutral-so-far-in-2016-endorsement-game/>

Valerie Bauerlein

The endorsement game is in full swing here, with prominent South Carolinians playing hype man for their candidates at rallies from Clemson to Charleston. But there are a couple of politicians whose support is coveted and unpledged, including Gov. Nikki Haley, an energetic campaigner with an 80% approval rating among likely Republican primary voters, according to a December poll by Winthrop University.

Note: A week ago, Ms. Haley said she was within days of deciding whether to endorse a candidate in the Feb. 20 GOP primary: "It's fair to say that this week I'm thinking really hard about whether I should, who I would, what that would look like," she said in a Feb. 3 interview. "I'm talking about it every night with Michael [her husband], we're in that mode."

Associated Press: House bill provides \$40M in aid to flood-devastated farmers

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=iTsy6Zpv

Seanna Adcox

South Carolina farmers devastated by last fall's flooding could get up to \$40 million in state aid to stay afloat under legislation advanced Wednesday to the House floor. The legislation approved 21-0 by the Ways and Means Committee allows farmers in disaster-declared counties to apply for grants of up to \$100,000 each. The grants could equal 20 percent of a farmer's total loss.

Note: In December, hundreds of farmers packed the Statehouse to beg Gov. Nikki Haley to ask for federal money to offset losses. But the Republican governor has refused, saying farmers shouldn't be treated differently than other businesses beyond what's already available, such as subsidized flood insurance.

The State: House panel approves \$40 million in flood aid for farmers

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article59652761.html>

Cassie Cope

The S.C. House's budget panel approved using \$40 million from a reserve account Wednesday to offer state aid to farmers whose crops were washed away during October's historic flooding. If approved, farmers could recover up to 20 percent of their loss — up to \$100,000 — via a grant, money that would not have to be repaid

Note: Farm groups have urged Gov. Nikki Haley to request assistance for farmers from the state's congressional delegation. But Haley's office has balked, saying the request is for direct cash payments to farmers who chose to be underinsured. Haley is asking the federal government for \$140 million to repair flood-damaged housing

S.C. General Assembly News:

Greenville News: New roads plan unveiled in South Carolina Senate

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/politics/2016/02/10/new-roads-plan-unveiled-south-carolina-senate/80197918/>

Tim Smith

Two senators not running for re-election are proposing a roads plan that would address funding, tax relief and reforms to the state's two agencies that handle transportation projects. But the proposal by Sen. Joel Lourie, a Columbia Democrat, and Sen. Ray Cleary, a Georgetown Republican, was not warmly embraced

by some in the chamber Wednesday afternoon.

The State: Controversial Infrastructure Bank to be part of roads debate

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article59664386.html>

Cassie Cope, Tim Flach

Changes to the controversial S.C. Transportation Infrastructure Bank will be part of the road-repair debate that state senators are preparing to have. State Sen. Ray Cleary, R-Georgetown, said the future of the Infrastructure Bank will be debated in addition to tax increases, tax decreases and changes to the Transportation Department's structure.

Note: Lourie called the plan a package of trade-offs that will require all sides in the Legislature — as well as Gov. Nikki Haley — to "give a little bit."

WCBD: SCDOT Lays Out Need for More Road Money

<http://counton2.com/2016/02/10/scdot-lays-out-need-for-more-road-money/>

Robert Kittle

State senators working on a plan to fix South Carolina roads heard from the SCDOT secretary Wednesday how far new money will go. Secretary Christy Hall told senators that an additional \$400 million a year, the amount the DOT would get in a House-passed plan, would prevent the decay of 95 percent of the state's Interstate highways, but would prevent the decay of less than half of state primary roads.

Spartanburg Herald Journal: Spartanburg County lawmakers hope to improve protections for domestic violence victims

<http://www.goupstate.com/article/20160210/articles/160219951>

Daniel J. Gross

Some local lawmakers are looking at ways to build on the state law passed last year that bans some domestic violence offenders from owning guns. While officials and victims advocates say the law is a good first step, they say more can be done to combat a major problem in South Carolina.

S.C. Political News:

The State: As race turns to SC, Graham settles into role of Bush campaign sidekick

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/article59616441.html#storylink=cpy>

Vera Bergengruen

This should have been Lindsey Graham's moment — a South Carolina Republican senator running for president on the eve of the Palmetto State's crucial Feb. 20 GOP primary. Leading up to 2016 the issues in the spotlight even broke his way, with the looming threat of the Islamic State and other foreign-policy matters commanding attention.

McClatchy DC: Without clarity from N.H., Marco Rubio and Jeb Bush turn to S.C.

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/politics-government/election/article59665936.html#storylink=cpy>

Patricia Mazzei

They yearned for clarity in New Hampshire. Marco Rubio hoped to crystallize his position as the Republican Party's great presidential hope heading into the South Carolina primary. Jeb Bush intended to prove his political muscle could still be as powerful as his family name and donor fortune.

Politico: Anti-Cruz group launches \$1.5 million ad blitz in South Carolina

<http://www.politico.com/story/2016/02/anti-cruz-group-launches-15-million-ad-blitz-in-south-carolina-219082#ixzz3zrcDXNLa>

Alex Isenstadt

Ted Cruz's critics are wasting no time hitting him in South Carolina. American Future Fund, a conservative group that spent heavily against Cruz in Iowa, will begin airing a TV commercial in South Carolina that labels Cruz as "weak" on national security — a damaging label in military-heavy South Carolina.

Spartanburg Herald Journal: Heidi Cruz urges supporters in Spartanburg to turn out for SC primary

<http://www.goupstate.com/article/20160210/articles/160219947>

Chris Lavender

The wife of Texas Sen. Ted Cruz says she's confident the South Carolina Republican presidential primary on Feb. 20 will reshape the race. Heidi Cruz campaigned for her husband in Spartanburg Wednesday at the Summit Pointe Convention Center. Ted Cruz finished first in the Iowa caucuses last week and third in the

New Hampshire Republican primary on Tuesday.

CNN: GOP establishment braces for S.C. showdown

<http://www.cnn.com/2016/02/10/politics/south-carolina-primary-republicans/index.html>

MJ Lee

Donald Trump's dominance in the New Hampshire primary is sparking a feverish battle in South Carolina for someone to emerge as the establishment favorite. Ohio Gov. John Kasich came in at a distant second place in New Hampshire, but his moderate message could be a tough sell in the conservative Palmetto State.

Washington Post: Fiery Republican race heads to S.C., known for dirty tricks and brawls

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/fiery-republican-race-heads-to-sc-known-for-dirty-tricks-and-brawls/2016/02/10/a99b161e-d024-11e5-b2bc-988409ee911b_story.html

Ed O'Keefe, Sean Sullivan, Philip Rucker

One of the first signs that the presidential campaign had arrived in the wild and woolly political state of South Carolina came Wednesday morning in this coastal retiree haven when Sen. Lindsey O. Graham introduced his favored candidate, Jeb Bush, and issued a warning.

New York Times: A Multifront Republican Battle in South Carolina

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/11/us/politics/donald-trump-and-bernie-sanders-gain-credibility-while-rivals-scramble.html?_r=0

Alexander Burns, Jonathan Martin

Donald J. Trump's rivals for the Republican presidential nomination dug in Wednesday for a hard fight in the South Carolina primary, where Mr. Trump will seek to gain a clear upper hand in the 2016 race after his smashing victory in New Hampshire.

Post and Courier: Trump rides New Hampshire primary wave, draws 4,000 to Clemson rally

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160210/PC1603/160219876>

Maya T. Prabhu

More than 4,000 people showed up to see Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump speak a day after his resounding win in the New Hampshire primary, where he received 35 percent of the vote. "We did a good thing," he said of Tuesday's win. "New Hampshire — what a great place — and we won it big. I got, last night, one hour of sleep. But when you get victory, you don't need a lot of sleep."

Associated Press: Kasich doing more campaigning along SC's coast

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=rKXkjzv8

Ohio Gov. John Kasich is continuing his campaign swing through South Carolina with several stops in the northeastern part of the state. The Republican presidential hopeful is participating in a town hall on Thursday at Applewood House of Pancakes in Pawleys Island. Later in the day, he holds two more town hall meetings in North Myrtle Beach and Florence.

Post and Courier: Kasich promises tax cuts, balanced budget while touring Charleston area

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160210/PC1603/160219958>

David Slade

Ohio Gov. John Kasich, the runner-up in the GOP New Hampshire primary Tuesday, brought his call for less divisive politics, tax cuts and a balanced federal budget to the Charleston area Wednesday. At the Nucor Steel mill in Huger, he pledged to improve trade deals and "break some glass, if necessary" to support the U.S. steel industry, if elected president.

Greenville News: Trump takes victory lap, hits Bush at Clemson rally

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/politics/2016/02/10/trump-takes-victory-lap-hits-bush-clemson-rally/80200798/>

Amanda Coyne

The rally was part victory lap, part stump speech and part get out the vote effort. Trump savored his New Hampshire win, recited crowd-favorite pledges to build a wall on the Mexican border and repeatedly reminded the audience: "I don't want your money, I want your vote."

Anderson Independent: Trump fires up crowd at Pendleton rally

<http://www.independentmail.com/news/trump-to-hold-rally-tonight-at-livestock-arena-in-pendleton-2b5c8e63-d4ed-5981-e053-0100007f1c08-368357131.html>

Kirk Brown

Seeking to build momentum after a decisive victory in the New Hampshire primary, Donald Trump fired up nearly 5,000 boisterous supporters during a rally Wednesday night at Clemson University's T. Ed Garrison Livestock Arena. Looking ahead to South Carolina's Feb. 20 presidential primary, Trump said, "If we win here, we're going to run the table."

Greenville News: Pollster: Trump's grip on lead weakens as GOP field consolidates

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/politics/2016/02/10/pollster-trumps-grip-lead-weakens-gop-field-consolidates/80211056/>

Rudolph Bell

Donald Trump will begin to lose his grip on frontrunner status the more the Republican presidential field consolidates, according to a leading pollster who spoke at Furman University Wednesday night. Peter Hart, founder of Hart Research, is pollster for NBC News and the Wall Street Journal.

Island Packet: Cruz, Bush campaign along Grand Strand 10 days before the presidential primary

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article59716871.html#storylink=cpy>

Charles Perry

With 10 days left until the presidential primary in South Carolina, two Republican contenders stopped along the Grand Strand for final stump speeches to reach those last few undecided voters. After Ted Cruz wrapped up his campaign stop Wednesday, John Leach couldn't help but notice the symbolism of the venue where the Texas senator spoke.

Politico: Bush: Trump would be worse than Obama

It's guns-blazing in South Carolina as Bush seeks a comeback.

<http://www.politico.com/story/2016/02/jeb-bush-donald-trump-obama-219108#ixzz3zriCekzg>

Austin Wright

Donald Trump would be a worse president than Barack Obama, Jeb Bush told a crowd here Wednesday. "We will be worse off than we are now" with Trump as president, Bush said. "And we are pretty bad off right now." Bush also levied his usual litany of attacks against Trump, taking on the billionaire mogul over his controversial remarks on the campaign trail.

CNN: George W. Bush cuts South Carolina radio ad for Jeb

<http://www.cnn.com/2016/02/10/politics/george-w-bush-jeb-south-carolina/>

Ashley Killough

As Jeb Bush plows ahead to South Carolina following his better-than-expected New Hampshire primary finish, George W. Bush is hitting the radio waves on behalf of his younger brother. "Jeb has dealt with crises as the governor of Florida, and he did so with steadiness, and a calmness necessary in a good leader," the former president says in the ad, which begins airing in South Carolina on Wednesday.

Post and Courier: Down-ballot Republicans may see victory in a second place finish to Trump

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160209/PC1603/160209323>

Schuyler Kropf

South Carolina might be Donald Trump's to lose, but a new storyline is emerging that says finishing second or even third in the upcoming Republican primary can go down as a victory. With their long-term viability a growing concern in a nominating race that may not be decided until April, the lower-tier candidates arrived Wednesday but only a few mentioned the bombastic front-runner.

Post and Courier: Palmetto Sunrise: Republican candidates continue campaigning in South Carolina on Thursday

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160211/PC1603/160219871>

Maya T. Prabhu

Continuing their push for South Carolina's undecided Republicans, several candidates will be in the state Thursday courting voters for the second day in a row. Texas Sen. Ted Cruz and retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson are scheduled to participate in the Carolina Values Summit at Winthrop University 6 p.m. Thursday.

Associated Press: Cruz, Santorum participating in SC discussion on race

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=6oafvkEc

At least two of the remaining Republican presidential hopefuls are coming to South Carolina to discuss race

issues. Texas Sen. Ted Cruz and retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson are participating in the Carolina Values Summit on Thursday at Winthrop University.

The State: Hillary Clinton campaigning in rural SC on Friday

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article59695931.html>

Jamie Self

Democratic frontrunner Hillary Clinton is holding a campaign event in Denmark on Friday. The campaign is billing the event a “Corridor of Opportunity” town hall meeting – a play on the name “Corridor of Shame” given to the impoverished, rural areas of South Carolina along the I-95 corridor that were once-flourishing agricultural communities.

Opinion / Editorial Roundup:

Greenville News: More evidence DOT reform is needed

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/opinion/editorials/2016/02/10/more-evidence-dot-reform-needed/80189814/>

Editorial

If there is any need for more evidence South Carolina’s Department of Transportation needs to be reformed and more funding is needed to upgrade the state’s infrastructure, consider a report in Sunday’s Greenville News. In that story, reporter Tim Smith revealed the dangers hydroplaning poses to South Carolina drivers, and the expense it means for state taxpayers

The State: DHEC needs funding to protect public health and safety

<http://www.thestate.com/opinion/editorials/article59633706.html>

Editorial

RIVERS THAT AREN’T being monitored often enough for us to know whether the fish are safe to eat. Air-monitoring equipment that’s so broken-down that officials don’t know whether it’s safe to issue permits for new industry. Underground storage tanks and abandoned gold mines that aren’t being cleaned up to stop gasoline and acid and metals from leaching into the groundwater.

Note: We’ve seen no reason to believe that Ms. Heigel, a former Duke Energy executive who was hand-picked by Gov. Nikki Haley to run the agency, is a spendthrift, or a shill for the bureaucracy. It’s more reasonable to think she’s a professional who put her reputation on the line and then discovered that the agency she inherited simply does not have the resources to do the job state law requires it to do.

Rock Hill Herald: Just go ahead and pass SC roads bill

<http://www.heraldonline.com/opinion/editorials/article59636006.html>

Editorial

Discussing what kind of roads bill the Legislature should pass might be futile when the Senate seems dead-set against passing any roads bill at all. Nonetheless, we agree with state Sen. Creighton Coleman, D-Winnsboro, who contends that passing a bill would be easier if paying for road repairs could be unlinked from income tax reform.

Note: Gov. Nikki Haley has pledged to veto any legislation that increases gas taxes unless it also drastically cuts income taxes and overhauls the DOT.

Post and Courier: Back to cybersecurity basics

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160211/PC1002/160219893>

Editorial

President Barack Obama, continuing what has become a more or less annual habit, announced yet another new plan for enhanced cybersecurity on Tuesday. And there is clearly a need for one. The Department of Homeland Security re-confirmed that much, also on Tuesday, by announcing that it was investigating the leak of personal contact information on more than 9,000 DHS employees and 20,000 FBI employees.

Post and Courier: Strengthen Conservation Bank

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160211/PC1002/160219894>

Editorial

Not everyone loves duck hunting. Or fishing. Or long walks through pristine woods. But everyone can appreciate the state’s natural beauty and historic assets — and how conserving those assets contributes to the state’s quality of life. And to a sound economy.

South Carolina News:

Post and Courier: Boeing to trim workforce, starting with executives, at commercial airplane division

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160210/PC05/160219919>

David Wren

The head of Boeing's commercial airplane division — which includes the company's North Charleston campus — told employees during a webcast on Wednesday that the aerospace giant will trim its workforce, starting with executives and managers.

Anderson Independent: Judge: Seneca must produce more info in Hammond case

<http://www.independentmail.com/news/federal-judge-seneca-must-produce-more-information-in-zachary-hammond-civil-suit-2b70b3ac-6424-1fbe--368394641.html>

Mike Ellis

A federal magistrate gave lawyers for the city of Seneca two weeks to give more detail on emails they sent to a public relations firm hired after a city officer shot and killed 19-year-old Zachary Hammond last summer. Hammond was shot and killed during a botched drug sting in a fast-food parking lot when a Seneca police officer tried to stop him from driving away.

Associated Press: Federal judge holds hearing in Charleston church shooting

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=bLVWnVq3

A hearing is being held to discuss the federal trial of a white man charged in the shooting deaths of nine black parishioners at a Charleston church. U.S. District Judge Richard Gergel meets with attorneys on Thursday in Charleston. Dylann Roof faces dozens of federal charges in the slayings at Emanuel AME Church last June.

Associated Press: Anti-submarine exercise torpedoes being tested off SC coast

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=a5JDncdW

The Navy will test new lightweight exercise torpedoes off the South Carolina coast during the coming days. The Naval Undersea Warfare Center in Newport, Rhode Island, announced that the testing begins on Thursday and will continue through next Tuesday.

Local News:

The State: Lawsuit might undo huge tax breaks for student housing

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article59651636.html>

Clif LeBlanc

The suit contends that it was illegal for Richland County and the city of Columbia to extend 50 percent property tax breaks to five complexes whose owners invested at least \$240 million collectively to build apartments intended to keep university students living in the city center rather than moving into private housing just outside of town.

Post and Courier: Charleston-area home sales sizzle in cool January

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160210/PC05/160219911>

Warren L. Wise

Cool weather didn't hamper Charleston-area home sales in January. Residential sales rose 7.2 percent last month over January 2015, according to preliminary data Wednesday from the Charleston Trident Association of Realtors. Last month, 963 homes changed hands in the region at a median price of \$217,000, up \$7,000, or 3.3 percent, from a year earlier.

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