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To:
Date: 1/29/2016 8:17:40 AM
Subject: Morning Clips – Friday, January 29, 2016

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

Greenville News: Senators agree on DOT reform bill, for now

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/politics/2016/01/28/senators-agree-dot-reform-bill-now/79473200/>

Tim Smith

The 9-6 vote by the Senate Transportation Committee Thursday was the first time in two years the panel has approved a bill on the contentious issue and it came despite opposition from some of its most powerful members, who agreed afterward the bill was a means of breaking a stalemate on road funding.

Note: The issue of restructuring the board of the state Department of Transportation was tied to road funding a year ago by Gov. Nikki Haley, who told lawmakers then that she would support raising the state's gas tax by 10 cents per gallon but only if they also scrapped the present system of picking highway commissioners and reduced the state's income tax.

The State: Flooded farmers gain support from House committee

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article57157683.html>

Sammy Fretwell

With torrential rains falling last October, Jeremy Cannon watched helplessly as water flooded the fields of cotton, tobacco and soybeans he had tended carefully through the summer. His Clarendon County farm was washing away -- and so were the profits he needed to make ends meet.

Note: Gov. Nikki Haley, who could veto the bill, also has declined to seek some federal money for farmers, saying she didn't want to single out one industry over another. She has said farms already are subsidized by the government in ways other businesses are not.

Note: White said the state farm fund is needed, even if Haley changed her mind and agreed to seek federal money. Farmers represent a unique part of South Carolina's economy, he said.

GSA Business: Haley, business, political leaders get behind workforce education bill

<http://gsabusiness.com/news/56822-haley-business-political-leaders-get-behind-workforce-education-bill?rss=0>

Surrounded by a host of state political and business leaders, Gov. Nikki Haley on Wednesday announced a collaborative effort to ensure South Carolina's workforce gets the training and education it needs to fill current and future jobs. That effort includes backing legislation introduced in the S.C. House of Representatives to fund and streamline the training programs offered by the state's technical colleges.

Note: "There's no reason why we can connect the dots," Haley said. While South Carolina is making progress in attracting business it also is a "state that has a solid workforce and one that puts people back to work," Haley said. "Our goal in South Carolina is to lift everybody up in every corner of the state, and to do it in a way that they feel like they are moving forward and that they are moving their families forward, and this is a start in a new direction."

WIS: Roads bill is up for more debate

<http://www.wistv.com/story/31084347/roads-bill-is-up-for-more-debate>

Will Whitson

The House bill proposing a fix to South Carolina roads will finally get debated on the Senate floor Tuesday, but not without some changes. The road funding bill, which has been held up in the Senate since 2015, passed the Senate Transportation Committee late Thursday afternoon to get its first debate on the Senate floor when lawmakers return next week.

Note: Lawmakers also amended the bill regarding Department of Transportation Commissioners, which is a required reform Gov. Nikki Haley requested. Lawmakers will allow the governor the pick DOT commissioners from a list picked by the 10 councils of government around the state.

Aiken Standard: South Carolina roads get near failing grade

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20160128/AIK0101/160129414>

Dan Brown

South Carolina Department of Transportation Secretary Christy Hall didn't mince words when she gave a state of the DOT address to the state's transportation commissioners last week. In her address, Hall gave the state's roads a grade of "D" in day-to-day maintenance, adding most of the state's motorists are driving on poorly paved roads.

Note: Governor Nikki Haley's budget proposal has earmarked roughly \$350 million for roadwork, which includes a \$49 million phased-in gas price increase. In 2015, Haley said she would support raising the gas tax by 10 cents over three years if legislators cut income taxes significantly over 10 years.

S.C. General Assembly News:

Associated Press: Senate panel approves bill to have DOT board add seats

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=TR90FOlq

A Senate committee has approved a bill having the board that runs South Carolina's road department expand to 10 seats in regional government districts. The Transportation Committee sent the proposal to the Senate floor in a deeply divided vote Thursday. The bill has each of the state's 10 Council of Governments choose three DOT board candidates, vetted by a committee appointed by lawmakers.

The State: Senators set framework for roads deal

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article57156568.html>

Cassie Cope

State senators laid the framework for a road-repair bill Thursday as the Senate Transportation Committee approved changing the Transportation Department's oversight. However, critics said the proposed change will continue to blur responsibility and encourage "parochialism" on the Transportation Department commission.

Note: Republican Gov. Nikki Haley has pushed for more executive control over the roads agency. The House-approved road-repair bills would allow the governor to name all commission members.

Associated Press: House leader hopes to give farmers relief ahead of budget

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=5eOf6dky

The state House's budget leader says South Carolina farmers devastated by last fall's flooding shouldn't have to wait until the Legislature passes a budget to get some help. Ways and Means Chairman Brian White says legislators can go ahead and designate some of the state's surplus money to help farmers survive last year's losses. But he's not yet proposing an amount.

WIS: Lawmakers talk state of nuclear energy in SC

<http://www.wistv.com/story/31087064/lawmakers-talk-state-of-nuclear-energy-in-sc>

Will Whitson

Lawmakers from both the House and Senate met this morning to learn about the state of nuclear energy in South Carolina. Also they heard about just how extensive nuclear power is in the state. Lawmakers from each district with a connection to nuclear energy heard just how many jobs, investments, and projects groups like SCANA, Duke Energy and Fluor provide in the Palmetto State each year.

WIS: Charleston senator calls for lawmakers to join anti-gun violence event

<http://www.wistv.com/story/31087199/charleston-senator-calls-for-lawmakers-to-join-anti-gun-violence-event>

Will Whitson

Charleston Senator Marlon Kimpson is calling on fellow lawmakers to join in "Stand Up Sunday" church events against gun violence. Stand Up Sunday will take place this Sunday in churches across the state. Kimpson has filed several bills to tighten up gun controls in the state after the Charleston church shootings.

S.C. Political News:

Post and Courier: Henry McMaster says Donald Trump perfect for voters looking for someone 'unique'

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160128/PC1603/160129368>

Cynthia Roldan, Emma Dumain

Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster knows he spun a lot of heads by endorsing Donald Trump but believes the

Republican presidential front-runner is “uniquely” qualified to tap into new crops of voters who previously were left out or apathetic about the electorate process.

Note: McMaster’s endorsement of Trump also represents a split from his ally, Gov. Nikki Haley, who has been critical of Trump’s political rhetoric, including in her nationally televised response to President Barack Obama’s State of the Union. Haley, who has not said if or when she plans to endorse a presidential candidate, stressed Wednesday all she asked from all of the candidates was to stay “civil and respectful.”

Aiken Standard: S.C. Reps. Hixon, Corley endorse Trump; few officials publicly back presidential candidates

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20160128/AIK0101/160129415/sc-reps-hixon-corley-endorse-trump-few-officials-publicly-back-presidential-candidates>

Christina Cleveland

With the Iowa caucuses just days away, some Aiken County elected officials have already backed 2016 presidential hopefuls joining other South Carolina politicians who have begun endorsing candidates. Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster endorsed GOP frontrunner Donald Trump before introducing the New York businessman at a campaign rally in Lexington County on Wednesday.

Aiken Standard: Aiken GOP chairman announces run for S.C. Statehouse

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20160128/AIK0101/160129425/aiken-gop-chairman-announces-run-for-sc-statehouse>

Maayan Schechter

Aiken GOP Chairman K.T. Ruthven announced his intentions late Thursday to run for South Carolina House member Don Wells’, R-Aiken, seat in the upcoming November election. In an email Thursday, Ruthven said the decision to run for the House of Representatives has been one he’s considered for a long time.

Spartanburg Herald Journal: Duncan mayor to challenge Bright for Senate seat

<http://www.goupstate.com/article/20160128/articles/160129678>

Duncan Mayor Lisa Scott said Thursday she will seek the S.C. Senate District 12 seat currently held by Republican state Sen. Lee Bright of Roebuck. Scott, 53, of Duncan, was elected mayor in December 2013 after serving on the town council for two-and-a-half years. Scott is a 1981 graduate of Byrnes High School.

Anderson Independent: Candidates file for S.C. Senate, Anderson City Council

<http://www.independentmail.com/news/candidates-file-for-sc-senate-anderson-city-council-2a6e98f7-82fd-0384-e053-0100007f1f71-366920921.html>

Willie Day has filed paperwork to run for the vacant South Carolina Senate District 4 seat. Day is the city of Anderson’s former neighborhood and transit director. He is running as a Republican. Three other Republicans have filed for the seat: state Rep. Mike Gambrell of Honea Path, Williamston Town Councilman Rockey Burgess and Greenwood attorney Tripp Padgett.

Opinion / Editorial Roundup:

Post and Courier: Stormy menace to power grid

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160129/PC1002/160129334>

Editorial

A heavy dose of winter weather severely disrupted travel, work, school and electricity supply from North Carolina to the Canadian border late last week. It even produced enough snow in the Upstate for Clemson football coach Dabo Swinney, some Tigers players and high school prospects visiting the school to sled down “The Hill” into Death Valley.

South Carolina News:

Post and Courier: More sex trafficking cases being reported in South Carolina

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160128/PC16/160129377>

Dave Munday

The number of sex trafficking cases reported in South Carolina continues to increase, according to data released Thursday. Polaris, a group in Washington that tracks human trafficking around the world, released 2015 figures from the National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline in the United States.

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