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Subject: Clips – Wednesday, December 24, 2014

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

Aiken Standard: Expect wide ranging debate on roads and bridges
<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20141223/AIK0101/141229785>

Maayan Schechter

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley in the past stated she wants to give lawmakers a new proposal for road funding by January, but lawmakers continue to work independently on the issue as road and bridge improvements are consistently listed as a priority for the next session.

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The State: GOP dominates 2014 elections in SC

http://www.thestate.com/2014/12/23/3891111_gop-dominates-2014-elections-in.html?rh=1

Andrew Shain

The story: Republicans expected to win South Carolina's statewide races Nov. 4, but even veteran Palmetto politicians were surprised by the double-digit routs rolled up by the slate of GOP candidates. Republican Gov. Nikki Haley, for example, tripled her victory margin over Democratic state Sen. Vincent Sheheen from their first meeting four years earlier.

The update: Having easily won re-election, Haley should look forward to easier legislative sessions during her second term. Why? Two of her nemeses, both Charleston Republicans, are now out of office.

Opinion / Editorial Roundup:

Aiken Standard: Expediting court case at least sets right pace

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20141224/AIK0201/141229802/1018/AIK02>

Editorial

A ruling by the South Carolina Supreme Court to dismiss a lawsuit related to Project Jackson would have been the most beneficial, but expediting the case is still positive for the City of North Augusta. The quicker a ruling comes from the court, the greater sense the City can have as to what to do moving forward. Project Jackson is a worthwhile development for North Augusta, as well as the rest of Aiken County.

The State (Guest Column): Bill aims to combat anti-gun zealotry

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/12/24/3890473/clemmons-bill-aims-to-combat-anti.html>

Rep. Alan Clemmons

Zero-tolerance policies are out of control. What started as school board attempts to stop students from bringing guns into school has turned into an anti-Second-Amendment movement, with significant social consequences. I was shocked in August when a Summerville student made national news after he was suspended and arrested for writing a fictional essay about buying a gun to shoot his neighbor's pet dinosaur.

Rock Hill Herald: Time to take new approach with Cuba

<http://www.heraldonline.com/2014/12/23/6650885/time-to-take-new-approach-with.html?sp=/100/105/>

Editorial

Cuba won't be transformed into a free-market democracy overnight because President Barack Obama has decided to restore diplomatic relations with that island nation. But the president's decision might mark the moment that Cuba begins moving in that direction.

Post and Courier: Sunoco vote sets bad precedent

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20141224/PC1002/141229734>

Editorial

After more than a year of controversy and multiple votes against the plan, Sunoco won final approval from North Charleston City Council last Thursday to rezone land for a new gas station and convenience store on University Boulevard. There are a lot of problems with that decision.

S.C. General Assembly News:

Aiken Standard: Aiken County legislators pre-file for states' convention, fair tax

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20141223/AIK0101/141229806/1004>

Derrek Asberry

Representatives in the Aiken County legislative delegation have hit the ground running by pre-filing bills to gain position at the top of the agenda when legislators get back to Columbia in January. S.C. Rep. Bill Taylor, R-Aiken, is continuing his push for an Article V Convention of States and pre-filed for the bill about three weeks ago.

South Carolina News:

Greenville News: State's prosecutors request more funding for criminal cases

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/2014/12/23/states-prosecutors-say-public-risk-without-funding-criminal-cases/20819773/>

Davis Dykes

With South Carolina exceeding national crime rates in all but one category, the state's prosecutors are warning their offices don't have enough money to keep up with thousands of criminal cases waiting for trial and potential delays are a threat to public safety.

Associated Press: SC among top 10 fastest-growing states

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/2014/12/23/sc-growth-spurt/20814495/>

The Carolinas continue to rank among the nation's fastest-growing states, newly released U.S. Census population estimates show. South Carolina added more than 60,000 new residents to reach a total population of more than 4.8 million. That put the Palmetto State's growth rate among the top ten fastest-growing states nationally.

Post and Courier: South Carolina students face new timed tests for English and math

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20141223/PC16/141229773>

Amanda Kerr

Amid continued uncertainty about statewide exams for English and math, teachers and students must prepare for a new timed test that will be used this spring. The South Carolina Department of Education last month informed the state's more than 80 superintendents it would move forward with using Iowa-based ACT Inc.'s Aspire tests to assess student performance in English and math in April.

Post and Courier: Attorney General Alan Wilson looks back on contentious 2014

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20141223/PC1603/141229752>

Jeremy Borden

Early in 2014, S.C. Attorney General Alan Wilson said he hit an all-time low. The ethics-related case he was pursuing against former House Speaker Bobby Harrell had become an all-consuming affair. At one point, a circuit court judge said Wilson had overstepped his authority.

Post and Courier: Here we grow: South Carolina challenging Alabama for 23rd largest state

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20141223/PC16/141229759>

David Slade

Watch out, Alabama. One more year, and South Carolina's population growth could make it the nation's 23rd largest state, bumping Alabama to 24th. South Carolina's population growth continued at a brisk pace through mid-2014, putting the state among the top 10 in the nation for both the pace of growth and the actual number of additional residents, the Census Bureau reported Tuesday.

Aiken Standard: Supreme Court denies motion to dismiss Project Jackson appeal

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20141224/AIK0101/141229813/1004>

Teddy Kulmala

The S.C. Supreme Court last week denied the City of North Augusta's motion to dismiss an appeal

regarding the Project Jackson development, meaning the appeal will proceed. In late October, the City filed a motion asking the state Supreme Court to take original jurisdiction of the matter, skipping the Court of Appeals.

Associated Press: Metts 2nd attempt at guilty plea set for Dec. 30

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=hC66RY9b

Jeffrey Collins

Former Lexington County Sheriff James Metts is scheduled to be in federal court next week to attempt to plead guilty again to a charge that he tried to prevent the possible deportation of four immigrants in the country illegally. The immigrants were working at Metts' friend's restaurant. Court officials scheduled a change of plea hearing for next Tuesday.

Associated Press: NC now 9th largest state; SC has growth spurt

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

The Carolinas continue to rank among the nation's fastest-growing states, newly released U.S. Census population estimates show. North Carolina has overtaken Michigan to become the nation's ninth-largest state, adding more than 95,000 new residents between July 2013 and July 2014. That pushed the state's total estimated population to just shy of 10 million.

Times and Democrat: SCSU trustee resigns; candidates sought for board

http://thetandd.com/news/scsu-trustee-resigns-candidates-sought-for-board/article_e7be6460-8b32-11e4-874a-07662339b14a.html

Dale Linder-Altman

Trustee Erika Abraham resigned from the South Carolina State University Board of Trustees last Friday, according to the state's Joint Legislative Screening Committee. Abraham took over Congressional Seat 3, previously held by Bob Waldrep, on July 1. She has not attended any board meetings, and Chairman Dr. William Small had asked trustee Ronald Henegan Jr. to speak with her about her absences.

Associated Press: USC trustee arrested on disorderly conduct charge

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=gfsOcr49

University of South Carolina trustee Chuck Allen has been arrested on a public disorderly conduct charge. Multiple media outlets reported that the 55-year-old Anderson attorney was arrested after a South Carolina Highway Patrol trooper was sent to what was thought to be a wreck Dec. 18.

Times and Democrat: Texting while driving? Expect blue lights

http://thetandd.com/news/texting-while-driving-expect-blue-lights/article_ef4ae53a-8b1b-11e4-8fa7-2f7a7c0020db.html

Richard Walker

Authorities are reminding motorists not only to buckle up, be careful and stay safe, but also to be aware the grace period for texting while driving is over. The 180-day grace period ended on Dec. 7. With holiday shopping and traffic on the rise as Christmas and New Year's draw closer, law enforcement officials are now issuing tickets to motorists who text while driving.

Associated Press: January hearing set for former state Rep. Viers

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=0zeKLYo5

Meg Kinnard

A former South Carolina House member is expected in court next month as part of a federal money laundering case against him. A Jan. 6 hearing has been scheduled for former state Rep. Thad Viers, 36, according to court records. Jury selection has been scheduled for February.

Associated Press: Judge says USC fraternity members must move

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

A judge in Columbia says about 30 University of South Carolina students in the Kappa Sigma fraternity house must find somewhere else to live before the new semester begins Jan. 12. Circuit Judge Casey Manning refused to allow the fraternity members to live in the house since the chapter lost its charter. The State newspaper (<http://bit.ly/1sXyoYy>) reported.

S.C. Federal Delegation News:

Anderson Independent: Graham bound for Afghanistan to spend holiday with the troops
http://www.independentmail.com/news/graham-bound-for-afghanistan-to-spend-holiday-with-the-troops_07121980

Vince Jackson

When asked about a possible run for the presidency in 2016, U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham said Tuesday that he is qualified to lead the country because of his unique perspective on national security. At a ribbon-cutting event Tuesday, hosted by the Clemson Area Chamber of Commerce at the Villa Toscana on Main, Graham lightheartedly explained he once lived in the house that now houses the restaurant.

Local News:

Bluffton Today: Jasper County bests S.C., nearly matches U.S. jobless rate
<http://www.blufftontoday.com/bluffton-news/2014-12-24/jasper-county-bests-sc-nearly-matches-us-jobless-rate#.VJrVE14BM>

Sarita Chourey

Unemployment in Beaufort and Jasper counties hovered at 6 percent or just below from October to November, while South Carolina as a whole remained at 6.7 percent. Nationally, the November unemployment rate kept steady at 5.8 percent. From October to November, Jasper County, home to many residents who commute to Beaufort County for work, worsened slightly from 5.8 percent to 5.9 percent.

Index-Journal: Public comments sought on roads plan
<http://www.indexjournal.com/news/Public-comments-sought-on-roads-plan>

Daniel Perry

Lakelands residents have until Friday to offer public comments on improvement projects for roadways. The South Carolina Department of Transportation is soliciting input on the most pressing road projects selected for the 2015 Act 98 Nonfederal Aid Pavement Program.

Sun News: Renee Hembree strives to improve, empower North Myrtle Beach teens through program
http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/2014/12/24/4687782_renee-hembree-strives-to-improve.html?sp=/99/209/&rh=1#storylink=cpy

Jason Rodriguez

Though it takes many donors and volunteers to help provide clothing, school supplies, medical expenses, gas money and even prom dresses for the teens whose parents have either abandoned them, are in prison or are battling a substance addiction, Renee Hembree has made it her life's work to see those teenagers succeed.

National News:

Associated Press: US economy accelerates and helps lift Dow to 18K
http://www.heraldonline.com/2014/12/23/6649595_us-economy-grew-at-fast-5-pct.html?rh=1

Martin Crutsinger

A surge in U.S. economic growth lifted stocks Tuesday to record highs and showed that the United States is putting distance between itself and struggling economies around the world. Fueled by hiring gains, cheaper gas and rising confidence, consumers and businesses drove growth to a sizzling 5 percent annual rate last quarter.

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