

From: Symmes, Brian
To:
Date: 12/29/2013 10:16:53 AM
Subject: Clips - Sunday, December 29, 2013

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

The State: The Buzz: Gunning for the SC governor's mansion

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/12/28/3180156/the-buzz-gunning-for-the-sc-governors.html>

Andrew Shain

A gunfight broke out last week on the way to next year's South Carolina governor's race. Republican Gov. Nikki Haley shared a photo of her new Beretta handgun that she got from her hubby for Christmas on her Facebook page. Democrats cried politics – not so, Haley's people insisted – as thousands reacted on social media to Haley's holiday gift. The gov's Facebook post alone notched a personal-best 18,200-plus likes, while a debate over gun control and political ideology raged on Twitter.

Still waiting on McConnell: The Buzz keeps asking, but word is that Lt. Gov. Glenn McConnell still has not decided whether he will stay in politics or make a run at the presidency of his alma mater, the College of Charleston.

100 Renaissance Weekends: The New Year's "house party" mixing politics, arts, business and academia that was started in the Lowcountry by Phil and Linda Lader holds its 100th meeting this weekend.

S.C. Political News:

Associated Press: GOP governors defend edge over Democrats in 2014

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

Thomas Beaumont

Republicans swept into governorships on a tea-party fueled wave of discontent four years ago, taking over statehouses long governed by Democrats with promises of conservative economic and social policy makeovers. In states across the Midwest and Southwest, GOP governors followed through on those promises, winning far-reaching changes in labor, budget and social policy. Now, those same governors are preparing to face the voters next year, promoting their accomplishments while keeping arm's length from their unpopular colleagues in Congress.

The State: Half-dozen SC House members may not seek re-election

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/12/28/3180129/half-dozen-sc-house-members-could.html>

Adam Beam

At least eight S.C. House lawmakers – five Republicans and two Democrats – may not seek re-election in 2014, sending Republican and Democratic leaders searching for their replacements. Instead of seeking re-election, most of those House members are considering races for higher office, largely focusing on two races — for superintendent of education and lieutenant governor. State Reps. Mike Anthony and Bakari Sellers, both Democrats, have said they will run for state superintendent of education and lieutenant governor, respectively.

Opinion / Editorial Roundup:

Greenville News: Start 2014 roads debate with plan

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2013312290015>

Editorial

When South Carolina legislators debate solutions in the coming year for funding needed to improve the state's massive road system they need to start with a comprehensive plan that would provide a stable revenue stream over the long term and from a variety of sources. They now have before them a plan that would serve as a good starting point for those discussions. Sen. Ray Cleary, a Republican from Georgetown County, has prepared 17 amendments to a bill on the Senate's calendar that would raise an array of fees and taxes to generate about \$900 million in additional highway funding.

Sun News: Rice would do more for his constituents by focusing on S.C. economy

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/2013/12/29/3924836/editorial-rice-would-do-more.html#storylink=cpy>

Editorial

It's frustrating to learn that the novice U.S. representative from South Carolina's new congressional district thinks he's serving his constituents in pressing for a lawsuit against President Barack Obama over health insurance, immigration policies, the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Social Security Act. Home from Washington for the holidays, Rice talked at a town hall meeting in Aynor about a resolution he's backing that would "bring a civil action for declaratory or injunctive relief to challenge certain policies and actions taken by the executive branch."

Post and Courier (Guest Column): Weak ethics bill is not enough

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20131229/PC1002/131229420/1021/weak-state-ethics-bill-is-not-enough>

John Crangle

The situation today is much different than in 1991 when the last major ethics act was passed by the South Carolina Legislature. At least this time Gov. Haley, while not proposing a reform package herself, has appointed a well-qualified task force and adopted and advocated all of its major proposals, opposing none. There is no Operation Lost Trust bribery scandal implicating 18 members of the General Assembly and major executive officials who enraged the voters going into the 1992 elections for both the House and Senate.

Post and Courier (Guest Column): Why Lindsey Graham is bad for South Carolina

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20131228/PC16/131229466/1031/why-lindsey-graham-is-bad-for-south-carolina>

Dianne Belsom and Kevin Thomas

The tea party is a political movement, not a political party, and it began as a spontaneous reaction to the overreach of the federal government. Spurred on by Rick Santelli's rant, I (Dianne Belsom) organized a Tax-Day Tea Party Rally in April 2009 in my town of Laurens. However, it quickly became clear that our movement wasn't so much about taxes as it was about freedom, and it also quickly became clear as to which of our elected representatives were on our side.

South Carolina News:

Post and Courier: Tim Scott and Mark Sanford take different paths to D.C.

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20131228/PC16/131229465/1009/tim-scott-and-mark-sanford-take-different-paths-to-dc&source=RSS>

Schuyler Kropf

Anyone introduced to South Carolina politics for the first time might have a hard time understanding how U. S. Sen. Tim Scott and U.S. Rep. Mark Sanford rose to the pinnacles of power in 2013. While both have similar Republican, conservative philosophies, they made it to Washington via far different paths. No black Republican anywhere in America has risen as far or as fast as Scott. After struggling as a student in North Charleston, he went on to launch a political career that progressed from Charleston County Council to the state Legislature to the U.S. House. Last year he was appointed by Gov. Nikki Haley to fill Jim DeMint's vacancy in the U.S. Senate.

Greenville News: Students face tougher GED exam

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2013312290042>

Ron Barnett

If earning a high school diploma seemed too steep a mountain to climb, the road to earning a GED is about to become more difficult, with a new, harder, computerized test that costs nearly twice as much going online Jan. 2. The good news is that it will better prepare graduates for jobs and higher education, according to the company that administers the test and local people who help prepare students for it. And there will be more places to take the test — and more chances to pass it.

The State: Debt owed by S.C. college graduates rising

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/12/28/3180126/debt-owed-by-sc-college-graduates.html#storylink=cpy>

Andrew Shain

Danny Lloyd just finished his first semester at the University of South Carolina, but the Columbia native

already knows he will get more than a mechanical engineering degree when he graduates. Lloyd expects to have roughly \$20,000 in tuition debt — a prospect that provides him a strong incentive to find work in the state's growing aerospace industry: "It's going to weigh over my head so I better get a good job so I can pay this back." The average debt for S.C. college graduates was \$27,416 in 2012, according to an recent analysis of federal data compiled for the Institute for College Access & Success, a California-based research group.

Associated Press: Flu cases picking up in SC; 6 have died

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=42KfZcw

At least six people in South Carolina have died of the flu so far this season. The Greenville News reports (<http://gmol.co/1jT7UHM>) flu cases began rising dramatically the week before Christmas. The state Department of Health and Environmental Control says the first case in South Carolina was reported in October. The agency says 401 people as of Dec. 21 had been hospitalized for the flu. The six deaths occurred in Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester and Richland counties. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says the most prevalent strain this season is the H1N1 virus, which hits younger people hardest.

Local News:

Florence Morning News: Bumpy road leading to penny tax renewal tops year's political stories

http://www.scnow.com/news/politics/article_d12fd5fa-700b-11e3-84c6-0019bb30f31a.html

Gavin Jackson

During the past year, the \$145 million capital projects sales tax went from the depths of Florence County to the halls of the state Supreme Court to the Nov. 5 ballot. Voters approved it overwhelmingly, concluding the battle for the penny and making it the top political story of 2013. A 63.5 percent majority of Florence County voters approved the referendum to keep the penny sales tax in place through April 30, 2021, to fund nearly 100 projects during that period. Sales tax in the county will remain at 8 percent.

Island Packet: Beaufort County charities expect influx as unemployment benefits end

<http://www.islandpacket.com/2013/12/28/2868266/beaufort-county-charities-expect.html#storylink=cpy>

Dan Burley

Groups that help the poor and unemployed in the Lowcountry are bracing for the impact of Saturday's end to emergency unemployment benefits -- a move that could affect hundreds in Beaufort and Jasper counties. State agencies did not have specific numbers of how many long-term unemployed were stripped of the benefits in those counties, but more than 750 people were receiving unemployment assistance as of Dec. 21, according to the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce. Across South Carolina, 12,900 people saw those benefits end.

National News:

Associated Press: GOP can count ways to Senate majority

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268798/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=USNjXpqP

Donna Cassata

Republicans count enough competitive races to challenge Democrats for control of the Senate in next year's elections. But tea party challenges will make it complicated for them. Many Republicans worry about crowded primaries in states such as Georgia, Iowa and North Carolina where tea partiers and social conservatives are fighting for the nomination. Some feel tea party victors in similar fights prevented Republicans from winning a Senate majority in 2010 and again in 2012. Democrats hold an effective 55-45 edge in the Senate now. Republicans need a net gain of six seats to capture control.

Associated Press: Federal health market surpasses 1 million signups

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268798/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=zHnPUUlc

Josh Lederman

A December surge propelled health care sign-ups through the government's rehabilitated website past the 1 million mark, the Obama administration said Sunday, reflecting new signs of life for the problem-plagued federal insurance exchange. Of the more than 1.1 million people now enrolled, nearly 1 million signed up in December, with the majority coming in the week before a pre-Christmas deadline for coverage to start in January. Compare that to a paltry 27,000 in October -the website's first, error-prone month - or 137,000 in November.

Brian Symmes

Direct Line: (803) 734-0304

Cell: (803) 673-9437