

Title: **For S.C.'s 35,000 state workers, Legislature promises only pain**  
 Author: BY CASSIE COPE ccope@thestate.com  
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## LEGISLATIVE SESSION PREVIEW

# For S.C.'s 35,000 state workers, Legislature promises only pain

BY CASSIE COPE

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The 2017 legislative session, which starts Tuesday, could be one of the worst for S.C. state workers since the end of the Great Recession.

S.C. state employees — from law enforcement officers to social workers to mental health workers — are unlikely to get a pay raise. At the same time,

their paychecks will shrink because they will have to pay more toward their retirement costs.

Low pay and staffing cuts have led to overworked state employees and chaos at embattled agencies — from riots at the S.C. Department of Juvenile Justice to child deaths at the Department of Social Services,

said Carlton Washington, executive director of the S.C. State Employees Association.

“Rome is burning,” Washington said. “And none of the folks who are in leadership are sharing with the public that Rome is burning.”

### UNHAPPY WITH THEIR PAY

S.C. state employees already are unsatisfied with their pay.

A survey of 2,342 members of the S.C. State Employees Association found:

- 82 percent disagreed their pay was fair when compared to

### STATE EMPLOYEES ALREADY

SEE CUTS, 9A

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# CUTS

similar positions outside of state government.

- 81.6 percent disagreed their salary is fair for “the duties, responsibilities and education required” for their position.

- 58.5 percent said they have worked an additional job to supplement their income.

Last year, lawmakers approved the largest pay raise in a decade for state employees — a 3.25 percent increase. But, in four of the last 10 years, state employees did not get a raise.

State Sen. Darrell Jackson, D-Richland, said he plans to push for a pay raise this session, which must be approved as part of the state budget.

However, Democrat Jackson says it will be a heavy lift to pass a raise in the Republican-controlled Legislature this year.

Part of the problem is that legislators will have

less new, added money to spend this year.

Last year, they had more than a \$1 billion in added money to spend.

This year, they will have only about a third of that amount in added money — \$446 million.

Some of the added money will have to go to pay the cost of repairing storm damages from Hurricane Matthew. Other high priorities — from the state’s battered roads to underfunded rural schools — also are in line for more money.

### WORKERS, EMPLOYERS TO PAY MORE FOR RETIREMENT COSTS

New in that line is the state’s pension system, underfunded by \$20 billion to \$40 billion, depending on which estimate you rely on. Some of the state money that could have gone for workers’ pay raises likely will be go

to shore up that retirement system.

The bottom line is there just is not enough added money to start fixing the retirement system and give state workers an across-the-board pay raise, said state Rep. Bill Herbkersman, R-Beaufort, who chairs the House budget panel that considers pay raises.

As a result, many state employees will see their paychecks shrink in 2017 as they pay higher retirement costs.

Starting July 1, workers will contribute 9.16 percent of their paychecks for their retirement pension, up from 8.66 percent.

The agencies that employ those workers — including taxpayer-funded state agencies, school districts and local governments — also will pay more of their employee’s retirement costs: 12.06 percent of a worker’s sala-

ry, up from 11.56 percent

this year.

### MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES TO RETAIN NURSING STAFF

Some state agencies say they already are feeling pain.

The turnover rate among nursing staff at the S.C. Department of Mental Health — which operates hospitals, nursing homes and community mental health centers — was 22 percent in the state’s fiscal year that ended June 30, according to the agency.

In part, that is because the pay for those workers lags behind the private sector.

The annual average salary for a registered nurse in South Carolina is \$61,110, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The average salary for

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registered nurses who work for Mental Health is almost \$8,000 a year less — \$53,504, according to the agency. Nurses at community health care centers fare even worse, averaging \$49,065 a year.

“The wages paid by state agencies are, generally less, than what are paid by private employers,” said Mental Health spokesman Mark Binkley. However, “employee benefits for government employees — such as paid

leave, health care insurance and retirement — have been historically, generally, better than what is offered by private employers.”

However, that is no longer the case, a reality that is making it harder for the state agency to hire and retain workers. Mental Health listed 41 openings for nurses on the state’s jobs website Friday.

#### **FEWER STATE EMPLOYEES SERVING**

#### **MORE S.C. RESIDENTS**

Part of the problem is fewer state workers serving even more S.C. residents.

“You’ve got more state employees doing more work than we had a couple of decades ago,” said state Sen. John Courson, R-Richland, adding increased use of technology accounts for some of the state job losses.

Across government, S.C. agencies have almost 8,000 fewer employees

than two decades ago.

Full-time, state-funded employees peaked at 42,298 in the budget year 1999-2000, according to state revenue data. At the time, South Carolina had a population of 4 million, according to U.S. Census Data.

Full-time employees dropped to 34,444 in the budget year that started July 1 — although the state now has almost 5 million residents, according to census estimates.

### **4 key dates**

- **Tuesday:** First day of session
- **Wednesday:** Gov. Nikki Haley delivers her last State of the State speech
- **Feb. 20:** S.C. House Ways and Means committee begins its budget deliberations, ultimately developing a spending plan that goes to the full House and, later, the state Senate
- **May 11:** Last day of the regular session

### **4 new things this year**

- **A shorter session:** Last year, lawmakers approved shortening the regular legislative session by three weeks. That means the last day of the regular session will be May 11. Lawmakers can approve returning for a special summer session to handle specific topics, including bills that are in joint conference committees, any vetoes by the governor, vetoes and the state budget.
- **New governor:** President-elect Donald Trump’s nomination of Gov. Nikki Haley to be U.S. ambassador to the United Nations paves the way for Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster, a Trump supporter, to take over the Governor’s Mansion. A veteran of S.C. politics since the early 1980s, the former attorney general is well known for a friendly, easygoing demeanor. Both critics and supporters say that style likely will help McMaster in dealing with the state Legislature on highly charged issues.
- **New lieutenant governor:** Who replaces McMaster as lieutenant governor is up in the air. Conflicting opinions on the succession question caused state Sen. Tom Davis, R-Beaufort, to petition the Supreme Court to decide the issue. Davis and others argue the Senate president pro tempore — powerful state Sen. Hugh Leatherman, R-Florence — should become lieutenant governor, a largely ceremonial job. To avoid that, Leatherman could resign as pro tem and another senator could be elected Senate leader, ascending to lieutenant governorship. Others say McMaster can pick

his replacement because of changes in state law.

- **New Senate rules:** State senators have agreed to change some of their rules, including making it easier to end time-consuming filibusters, used to talk bills to death. During a December organizational session, senators also approved eliminating “minority reports” — a mechanism that senators use to block bills even though they have won approval in committee. Senators also made it so that high-priority proposals — so-called “special order” bills — will be debated earlier in the legislative day.

### **4 key issues in 2017**

- **Road repairs:** With anti-tax Gov. Nikki Haley on her way out the door, lawmakers could renew their push to increase the state’s 16.75-cent-a-gallon gas tax to pay to repair the state’s crumbling roads and bridges. Lawmakers have not increased the gas tax, the second-lowest in the nation, in nearly 30 years. The money is one of the state’s primary ways to pay for road and bridge repairs. Last spring, lawmakers approved a bonding plan to pay for some road repairs, promising to return in 2017 and come up with a long-term solution.
- **School funding:** Last spring, legislators failed to pass Haley’s proposal to borrow money to help poor school districts build and renovate schools. Lawmakers could revive that borrowing plan in 2017 as part of an effort to address the S.C. Supreme Court’s ruling that the state has not done enough for poor, rural schools.
- **Fixing the state pension system:** S.C.’s pension system

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for state and local government workers is underfunded by at least \$20 billion. As a result, legislators are expected to approve charging state workers and their employers — state and local government agencies, including schools — more for their pensions.

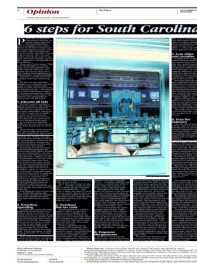
● **Looming investigation:** In December, special prosecutor David Pascoe indicted state Rep. Jim Merrill, R-Berkeley, on charges of ethics law violations and misconduct in office. Pascoe's State House corruption probe is ongoing and more indictments are expected.

Title: **6 steps for South Carolina**

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# 6 steps for South Carolina

**P**ROVIDE A DECENT education to all kids, no matter where they live.

Overhaul South Carolina's antiquated tax system. Spend our limited resources on our most important needs. Give the state's chief executive the tools to run the executive branch of government. Give city and county councils the tools to run their cities and counties. Loosen the Legislature's stranglehold on the judiciary.

These aren't sexy issues. They aren't politically or, in some cases, even conceptually easy. Aside from the first one, and maybe the second, they aren't the changes most legislators or lobbyists give a passing thought — and they certainly aren't the changes voters are clamoring for.

But they are the essential changes our Legislature needs to make in order to help make South Carolina the kind of state we all want it to be — the kind of state where businesses want to create good-paying jobs, where we all want to retire, where our children and grandchildren want to live out their lives.

## 1. Educate all kids

We don't need to provide a decent education to all children simply because the Supreme Court told our Legislature that the state constitution requires it. We don't need to do it simply because we find test scores embarrassing or feel sorry for kids when we hear about how far we fall short of the goal.

We need to do it because children who don't get a decent education drag down our whole state.

They end up in dead-end jobs and raise another generation just like themselves, and we pay for their welfare benefits and

medical care. If they can't get jobs and then become criminals, we become their victims; we pay for extra police to protect ourselves from them, and the jails that become their homes.

Educating all children starts with acknowledging that the poorest kids start school months or years behind better-off children, because their parents lack either the time, ability or desire to teach them to read and count and identify colors and raise their hands before they speak.

It involves providing teachers who can educate the poorest students at the same level as wealthier, easier-to-educate kids are educated, along with extra resources they need to catch up, from more intensive reading programs to muscular after-school and summer programs. Educating all children has to include giving principals the authority to get those good teachers into the classroom and weed out the ones who aren't up to the job.

And legislators have to give up the comfortable status quo, where they meddle too much in their local schools but won't intervene when those schools fail.

## 2. Prioritize spending

Our legislators write the state budget by assuming that everything we have ever done is essential and then divvying up any additional revenue. Rather than concentrating that new money where it can do the most good, they spread it around, to make as many people happy as possible. So we keep operating programs that are much less important than those we underfund. Think education, or child-abuse protection, or road maintenance.

That could work, if lawmakers wanted to raise taxes enough to pay for all that stuff we've al-

ways done in addition to all that stuff we need to do.

But if they don't want to raise taxes — and they clearly do not, and certainly should not under those circumstances — they need to figure out what we need to do as a state, how we best can do it and how much it will cost. Then they need to fund the most important services and eliminate the rest.

## 3. Overhaul the tax code

Our tax system is a cobbled-together shrine to special interests, more loophole than coherent whole. Consider the sales tax: If we eliminated all of our exemptions, we could slash our 6 percent sales tax to 3 percent and still collect the same amount of money.

Yet the Legislature keeps creating more loopholes and cutting more taxes. Instead, it needs to create a tax system that covers as large a swath of our economy as possible, at the lowest possible rate, that uses a smart combination of different taxes — sales, income, property,

gasoline and other specialty levies — to balance stability and fairness, a system that will promote rather than hinder our state's most important goals.

Although we're not crazy about its fixation on the income tax, we've been encouraged by the House panel that is working on a reform proposal; its members seem to understand that the most popular tax ideas don't make a lot of sense, and that simple fixes usually create more problems than they solve.

Also encouraging: the likely change of governors. Unlike

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Nikki Haley, we don't expect Henry McMaster to demand that a tax-reform package cut taxes by \$3 for every \$1 they are increased. (No, that's not a typo; yes, she really did demand that.) That makes actual reform — cleaning up the system, not simply raising or lowering overall tax collections — possible.

#### 4. Empower the governor

In the past few years, lawmakers have allowed governors to pick their own running mates, hire and fire the adjutant general and control the state's central administrative agency. But the directors of the state Education and Agriculture departments are still elected, as are two separate financial officers. That's bad enough, since public education is the most important thing a state does (nor do governors have any control over the state's colleges), but lawmakers also have severely limited gubernatorial authority over most of the other major agencies: SLED and the departments of Transportation, Public Safety and Health and Environmental Control.

The governor technically controls most other agencies, but only by hiring and firing hundreds of members of part-time governing boards. That means most of our government is controlled not by the person we elect to control our government but by a bunch of people we've never heard of — or by individual legislators who work the strings of power outside the public view.

We need to let the governor hire and fire the directors of nearly all state agencies. We also need to consolidate agencies with similar functions, in

order to reduce overlap, improve coordination and make it easier for governors — and legislators — to keep up with what those agencies are doing.

#### 5. Free cities and counties

It ought to be simple: We elect county council members to run our county and, if we live in a city, city council members to run that. But the Legislature routinely tells those elected officials what they can't do (raise taxes, regulate billboards, etc.) and what they must do (spend money on state services that the Legislature is supposed to help pay for but doesn't).

And that's just the beginning: State legislators still appoint important local governing boards such as county election commissions, and they maintain the independent special purpose districts that were created before counties had any power, to do the things that cities and counties ought to do.

This drives up costs, limits the ability to coordinate county and city services and, as we've seen with the Richland County Recreation Commission, invites all sorts of other problems as well.

This robs voters of the ability to decide how their communities are governed, and it needs to end.

#### 6. Free the judiciary

Like the federal government and the other 49 states, South Carolina has an executive branch, a legislative branch and a judicial branch. Unlike all but one of them, the Legislature controls the judiciary, electing judges with no input from the governor.

With lawmakers also controll-

ing the budget, the temptation is great for the judiciary to be subservient to the Legislature — or to powerful individual legislators. Even when judges are completely independent, this arrangement makes it hard to convince the public of that.

We believe the governor should appoint judges who are vetted by an independent merit selection commission and confirmed by the Legislature.

But there are other power-sharing arrangements that could work as well; the specific method matters less than ensuring that neither branch can intimidate our judges — or create that appearance.

One reason our Legislature has not been able to do the difficult work it needs to do — overhauling our tax system, setting spending priorities, making our public education system what we all need it to be — is that it has stretched itself too thin.

By properly allocating power — by leaving executive duties to the chief executive, by leaving local duties to local governments, by making the judiciary a co-equal branch — it will free itself to properly allocate our state's limited resources.

And that will allow lawmakers to devote all of their time to exercising the still-quite-significant legislative duties the constitution envisioned:

Deciding what powers and duties state agencies should have. Making sure those agencies perform as they should. And identifying ways to make South Carolina that state where businesses want to create good-paying jobs, where all of us want to live out our lives, and where our children and grandchildren know they can make productive lives for themselves and their families as well.



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RICHARD SHIRO Associated Press

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### State of State may move to this week

Gov. Nikki Haley will give what is expected to be her final State of the State speech Wednesday from 7 to 9 p.m., according to the S.C. Senate's invitations calendar. For that date to be final, however, a resolution will have to pass the state House and Senate, which return to Columbia on Tuesday for the start of the 2017 session. The State of the State speech was expected on Jan. 18. However, *The Post and Courier* reports Haley's U.S. Senate confirmation hearing as U.N. ambassador could be on that date. Haley's speech likely will be her farewell address as she set to become U.N. ambassador after President-elect Donald Trump's inauguration. Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster then will succeed her. — *The State*

Title: **Bitter cold to cover Upstate**  
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# Bitter cold to cover Upstate

Escapes from winter storm largely unscathed

STAFF REPORT

The Upstate has emerged from its first winter storm largely unscathed, as dry snow kept power outages at a minimum and the midday sun shined brightly throughout the afternoon to melt much of the trouble from major roadways.

However, the region now faces a new challenge as temperatures plunge into the teens.

The snow that blanketed the area north of Interstate 85 — though it left the area to the south

with but a trace — now presents the threat of black ice, prompting authorities to encourage drivers to be cautious if they have to drive at all.

And with temperatures expected to drop to a low of 14 degrees overnight, safe shelters are opening and residents are encouraged to prepare for bursting water pipes and potential power outages created by the high demand for

electricity.

"The spots that are wet on the road or slushy are just going to become ice," said Steve Wilkinson, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service, which estimated that more than five inches of snow fell in parts of the Upstate as the weekend began. "It's going to freeze pretty quickly."

Duke Energy reported modest power outages from the storm in South Car-

**Inside**

Check out more photos of the storm on **3A**.

**See STORM, Page 6A**

## Storm

Continued from Page 1A

olina, but the possibility remains for more outages because of the extreme cold.

"The low temperatures will put higher stress on the equipment used to generate and deliver electricity," Duke spokesman Ryan Mosier said. "Isolated equipment problems are possible, which could result in some scattered outages. That said, our system operators are closely monitoring the electric power system and Duke Energy is prepared to meet its customers' energy needs across the Carolinas."

Upstate schools will have to monitor road conditions as Monday approaches, though Wilkinson said another day of bright sunshine will help even if high temperatures are expected to hover around freezing.

The storm followed a familiar dividing line along I-85 Friday evening into Saturday morning.

In downtown Greenville, about 4 inches of snow fell, according to the weather service. Areas north such as Travelers

Rest saw as much as 5.5 inches.

But south of I-85, the drop-off was stark, with less than half an inch reported in the Golden Strip.

Wilkinson said the difference was a function of higher temperatures between 3,000 to 5,000 feet up in the atmosphere, which melted snow as it fell for much of the evening.

The National Weather Service forecast calls for a low of about 12 degrees tonight. High temperatures through Monday are expected to be in the low- to mid-30's, so much of the snow and ice is likely to stay around for several days.

Gov. Nikki Haley declared a state of emergency in advance of the storm, but there was no word Saturday on whether any National Guardsmen were deployed.

Shortly before noon, the Highway Patrol was reporting 19 accidents in the Upstate, including seven in Greenville County and one in Pickens County.

A Pendleton woman died after she was involved in an accident in Clemson Friday afternoon before the storm hit, according

to the Pickens County Coroner.

Ten women sought refuge from the weather Friday night at Miracle Hill Ministries' Shepherd's Gate, at 11 Regency Drive in Greenville, said Minda Shelton, the facility's director.

It's the only facility that houses women in Greenville in the cold weather and "we usually have more," Shelton said.

This year, the shelter opened its day-care area up to set up cots or mats with sheets, blankets and pillows, should the need arise. The shelter has space for at least 20 people.

Because the Christmas season has just ended, Shepherd's Gate has plenty of gloves, hats, scarves for clients as they venture outside of the shelter, she said.

What Shepherd's Gate could use from the community now is donations of canned goods.

"Today, so many of the places that they normally can go to after the sun comes up are closed, so we will have extra mouths to feed," she said.

Bon Secours St. Francis Health System



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reported one shoulder injury, one knee injury and one laceration from sledding.

Baptist Easley Hospital had staff stay overnight in case of weather-related incidents. But by 9 a.m. Saturday, there had been no accidents, falls or other incidents because of the snow, spokeswoman Andrea Stegall said.

Spartanburg Regional Healthcare system had fewer than 15 weather related injuries, spokeswoman Sarah Howell said.

Things were fairly quiet at Greenville Health System ERs as well, with two fractures from falls reported, spokesman Dudley Brown said.

There were 20 cancelled flights out of the Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport.

Shelters in Greenville are open for people in need.

The Salvation Army of Greenville has 130 beds for the homeless 365 days a year, in its Women's & Children's Shelter, Men's Shelter, and Men's Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Center (CSRC) at 417 Rutherford Street.

The organization began opening its emergency shelter, which consists of an additional 25 cots in its gymnasium, in December on nights when the temperature is below 40 degrees.

Chelsia Spivey, spokesperson for Salvation Army Greenville, expects the emergency shelter to be open for the remainder of the weekend for folks in need

of shelter or are experiencing homeless.

The organization is accepting donations of sleeping bags as well as electric heaters are for those in need.

Miracle Hill Rescue Mission is currently sheltering 50 to 60 men, but has space for up to 125, said Gary Dalton, the shelter's resident supervisor.

"If there's somebody out there that needs to come in this building to stay warm, send them here. We'll make a way," he said. "With the weather like this, we're not ever going to ask nobody to leave. We don't ever want to read in the paper that we had somebody freeze to death because there's no reason for that with us here."

Dalton said the community can help the organization care for the men by dropping off donations of toilet paper, coffee, donuts, pastries, coats, gloves, and knit hats.

Duke Energy was reporting more than 2,800 customers without power in South Carolina at 7 a.m. By 11 a.m., there were 724 without power in Greenville County and 163 in Pickens County. By 12:30 p.m., the number had fallen to 138 in Greenville and 108 in Pickens.

Road crews and electric providers enacted special plans to respond to weather developments while retailers have seen typical runs.

Snow accumulations generally increased away from downtown toward Greenville's Eastside, with five inches re-

ported in Taylors and Greer. Remarkably, just 15 miles to the south, there was no accumulation at all.

Large fluffy flakes fell steadily in Taylors overnight, and flurries continued Saturday morning as the sun broke through in brief spells.

Children gathered at the hill in front of Northwood Middle School to sled and play. Some in local neighborhoods built snowmen with the powdery but packable fluffy white stuff.

By 11 a.m., much of East North Street was a mixture of slushy snow. Traffic was light, but most cars appeared to be traveling at normal speed. One bicyclist risked a ride down the street.

The heavy snow clouds gave way to a streak of blue sky just above the Wade Hampton Fire Department station, and a biting wind made the air feel even colder than the reported 28 degrees.

In Mauldin, the roads were relatively quiet, as many residents decided to stay indoors. There were a few cars traveling down Laurens and East Butler Roads, but no major traffic problems to speak of, said Mauldin Mayor Dennis Raines.

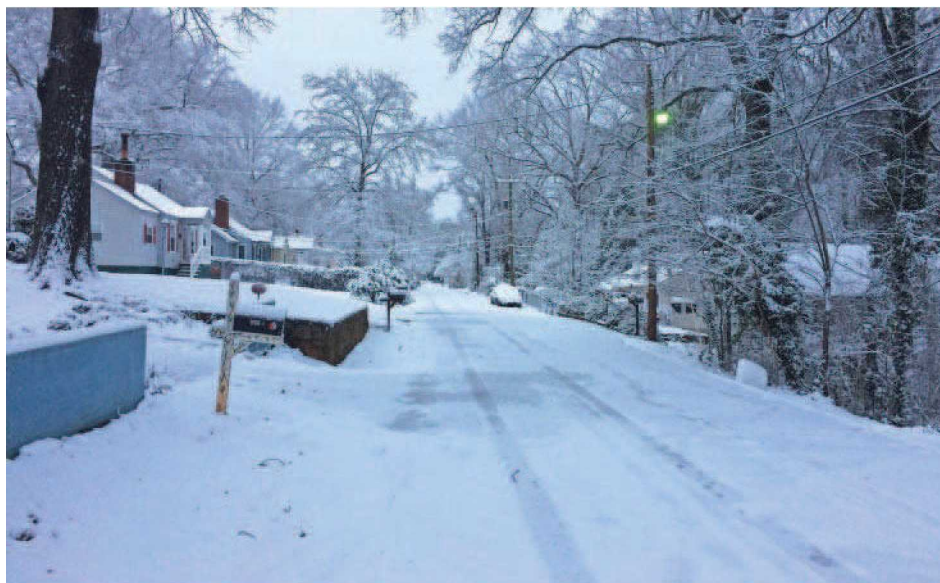
"We've had a few accidents here and there but it looks like everything's going well," Raines said. "We got close to an inch of snow in Mauldin so it was not too bad."



LAUREN PETRACCA/STAFF

**Snow covers the landscape in Travelers Rest after Winter Storm Helena.**

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ELIZABETH WALTERS

Light snow continues to fall across the Upstate Saturday morning.



DAVE HENNIGAN / STAFF

Snow blanketed the Upstate overnight Saturday.

Title: **Lawmakers open to bond bill for colleges**  
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# Lawmakers open to bond bill for colleges

## Some say borrowing would need to be vetted

**AVERY G. WILKS**

THE STATE

State lawmakers said Thursday they are open to borrowing hundreds of millions of dollars for construction and renovation projects at the state's public colleges and universities.

But any borrowing plan would need heavy vetting to ensure taxpayers' money is not wasted on unnecessary projects, some Republicans cautioned.

"Another sports complex with weight rooms and Jacuzzis? I'm not so sure," said state Rep. Bill Taylor, R-Aiken.

The state's colleges and universities desperately want legislators to pass the state's first bond bill for building projects since 2001.

They say they need the money for maintenance and renovation projects that were deferred when the state cut its funding of higher education after the Great Recession and to keep up with the competitors in other states.

Those projects make up the bulk of the roughly \$1 billion in added money that colleges and technical schools recently requested from the state in next year's budget.

Taylor said he could support some of those projects, including \$4 million to replace the aging heating and air-conditioning system at a building at the University of South Carolina-Aiken, in his home county.

Efforts to pass a bond bill for higher education have petered out in recent years in the state's GOP-controlled Legislature.

A \$500 million borrowing proposal, much of it for college projects, failed in 2015 after Republican Gov. Nikki Haley threatened to veto the plan, comparing it to running up the state's credit card debt.

In her State of the State address early last year, Haley again vowed to fight "any effort to bond out hundreds of millions of dollars to fill a wish list for our already bloated higher education system."

Now, however, Haley is slated to join the Trump Administration, making Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster the state's leader.

Senate Majority Leader Shane Massey said Thursday a push for a bond bill this year could be a "tough sell."

Lawmakers will want to vet the pro-

posed projects and determine whether other options are available, the Edgefield Republican said.

"A lot of these universities will tell you they have much deferred maintenance, but when you go on their campuses, you see a good bit of building," Massey said.

College leaders need better communication with legislators, University of South Carolina President Harris Pastides told *The State* recently.

"The money that we can acquire is so cheap right now, and that's not going to stay that way," Pastides said.

"Let higher education — with appropriate high accountability and oversight ... make the case, state the need, go out and borrow the money, have the state help us pay it back, and do great things."

State Sen. Brad Hutto, D-Orangeburg, said Thursday the Legislature's appetite for a bond bill "has always been high."

They may have their chance if McMaster replaces fellow Republican Haley this spring, he said. "We're just waiting on a governor who won't veto it."



Title: **Wind-chill advisory possibly in store**  
 Author: BY MANDY MATNEY AND MADISON HOGAN  
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## WINTER WEATHER

# Wind-chill advisory possibly in store

BY MANDY MATNEY  
 AND MADISON HOGAN  
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You might have dodged any sightings of snow flurries here in the Lowcountry Saturday, but it was still necessary to bundle up.

Although the winter weather threat is over, there's potential for a windchill advisory Sunday night, according to the National Weather Service.

Experts said Saturday afternoon that temperatures for Hilton Head Island were expected to reach around 29 degrees and even down to 23 degrees mid-island. But with the combination of cold wind, temperatures on the

skin will feel somewhere around 19 degrees, right at the threshold of a wind-chill advisory.

These drops in temperature means pets and plants should be brought indoors, according to the National Weather Service. If you dare to brave the cold yourself, you should don those gloves, scarves, hats and winter jackets you keep in the back of your closet.

While the Lowcountry was spared from sloppy winter weather Saturday, other parts of the state woke up to a snowy Saturday.

The blast of cold air making its way through the Carolinas arrived too

late for the participation to fall as snow or sleet in most of the state.

As of Saturday morning, a couple inches of snow were reported in the Greenville and Spartanburg areas, while the Lowcountry saw little rain.

On Friday, Gov. Nikki Haley declared a state of emergency in all 46 counties.

The weather system brought the first hard freeze of the season to the Lowcountry, with low temperatures in the 20s from Sunday night to Monday.

In a news release, the Charleston office of the National Weather Service warned that water on

roads Saturday night might freeze into black ice as temperatures dropped.

A warming shelter at Sea Island Presbyterian Church will be open from 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. Sunday and Monday nights to ensure that Beaufort County residents have a safe place to stay warm. Meals will be provided each evening and morning. Snacks and water also will be available. Residents needing transportation to the shelter should call Non-Emergency Dispatch at 843-524-2777.

*Mandy Matney:*  
 843-706-8147,  
 @MandyMatney



JAY KARR jkarr@islandpacket.com

Hilton Head Islander Andy Lattal jogs through Coligny Beach Park early Saturday.



Title: **Haley set to give final State of the State address**  
 Author: BY CASSIE COPE [ccope@thestate.com](mailto:ccope@thestate.com)  
 Size: 12.71 column inches  
 Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



# Haley set to give final State of the State address

BY CASSIE COPE  
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S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley will give what is expected to be her final State of the State speech Wednesday from 7 to 9 p.m., according to the S.C. Senate's invitations calendar.

For that date to be final, however, a resolution will have to pass the S.C. House and state Senate, which returns to Columbia on Tuesday for the start of the 2017 session.



Haley

The State of the State speech originally was expected to be held Jan. 18. But The Post and Courier of Charleston reported that Haley's U.S. Senate confirmation hearing as the next U.S. ambassador to the United Nations could be held on that date.

Traditionally, State of the State speeches outline the governor's legislative agenda. Haley's speech likely will be her farewell address.

She's expected to become U.N. ambassador after President-elect Donald Trump's inauguration on Jan. 20.

Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster then will succeed Haley as governor.

Title: **Rain,sleet, snow? Midlandsgets ready**  
 Author: [sellis@thestate.com](mailto:sellis@thestate.com)  
 Size: 120.74 column inches  
 Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



# Rain, sleet, snow? Midlands gets ready

Snowplows stand by as SC  
prepares for a frigid weekend  
Service providers for homeless  
could expand shelter hours

BY SARAH ELLIS

[sellis@thestate.com](mailto:sellis@thestate.com)

Some 500 tons of salt and more than 387,000 gallons of salt brine are prepared to combat possible icy roads across South Carolina as wintry precipitation falls over the Upstate and Midlands on Friday night and Saturday.

In the Columbia area, no more than about an inch of snow is expected, forecasters said. Slick streets

might be a concern given Friday's steady rain followed by the snow, beginning Saturday morning, and then freezing rain. Drivers should beware.

Temperatures will stay frigid all weekend.

S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley declared a statewide emergency Friday afternoon to allow the National Guard to provide extra equipment and man-

power for state agencies to help keep roads safe.

Local officials are monitoring weather conditions and preparing to mobilize trucks with snow plows and salt spreaders, if necessary.

And service providers for homeless people in the city are adjusting their operations to help keep people out of

**SEE STORM, 6A**

## Winter weather timeline for Columbia area

### Around 6 a.m. Saturday

– Rain transitions to a mix of rain, sleet and snow.

### Between 8 and 9 a.m. –

Precipitation mix transitions to snow.

### Late morning or early

**afternoon** – Snow transitions to freezing drizzle.

**FROM PAGE 1A**

## STORM

the dangerous elements.

The city's shelter for the homeless could stay open extra daytime hours Saturday if the roads are bad, said Craig Currey, director of Transitions, a quasi-private homeless center, which also runs the city's seasonal shelter near the downtown water treatment plant. That decision will be made early Saturday morning.

The shelter routinely

opens on nights when the temperature falls below 40 degrees. The facility can accommodate as many as 240 people a night, though only a few more than 100 people stayed overnight Thursday, Currey said.

Even if the center closes as scheduled Saturday morning, Transitions shelter at Main Street and Elmwood Avenue will welcome people off the

streets during the day, Currey said. Vans will drive people from the shelter to Transitions on Saturday, Currey said.

"We're not going to turn people away," Currey said. "There is no reason for people to be on the street ... freezing in the cold."

Columbia, Richland County and Lexington County public works crews had pretreated

roads and bridges with salt brine ahead of the storm. But Columbia's crews stopped salting the roads Friday as rain began to fall, which could wash away the salt, said Robert Anderson, the city's public works director.

City crews will monitor roads and bridges for those that need re-salting.

Meanwhile, the S.C. Department of Transportation had prepared

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snow and ice removal equipment and begun pretreating interstates and primary roads in some parts of the state. In areas where rain is expected to fall first – including the

Midlands, where rain started before lunchtime

## Safety tips

The general advice for folks on the road this weekend is predictable: Stay off the road. Here are some other tips for drivers and residents as the area anticipates snow and freezing rain Saturday.

### FOR DRIVERS:

If you come upon an icy street or intersection, turn around.

Don't come to a complete stop if you can avoid it.

Don't power up icy hills; your wheels will spin. Avoid stopping while going uphill.

Don't use cruise control.

To get out of a skid, lightly take your foot off the brake or gas to regain traction. Always look and steer in the direction you want to go.

Keep an emergency kit in your car with items such as an ice scraper, cat litter or sand for traction, jumper cables, cellphone charger, blankets, gloves, hats, food, water and medications.

Friday – roads will be treated during the transition of the rain to snow.

Some SCDOT road crews from the Lowcountry have been sent to help in the Upstate, where some areas were expecting around 6 inches of

snow.

If you become snowbound, stay in your car; it provides protection and makes it easier for rescuers to find you.

Be extra careful on bridges, which freeze first.

Fill up your windshield wiper fluid, as salt brine can accumulate on your windshield and reduce visibility.

### FOR RESIDENTS:

Keep handy items needed in case of a power outage, such as flashlights, batteries, a battery-powered radio and a car charger for your cellphone.

Trim tree branches in your yard that hang over power lines.

If the power goes out, avoid opening the fridge or freezer to keep the temperature cold

for longer. Also, unplug appliances and leave only one light on to prevent a power surge.

To prevent pipes from freezing and bursting, keep your home heated to at least 65 degrees. Leave inside faucets dripping, and cover outside spigots and disconnect any hoses from them.

Stay away from downed trees or power lines.

Help people who might need special assistance, including children, the elderly and the disabled.

Keep yard debris and other items away from storm drains to help the storm drainage system.

Sources: AAA Carolinas, city of Columbia



ROB THOMPSON SCDOT

Department of Transportation workers' tasks included loading salt and calcium chloride into spreader trucks Friday. Dump trucks were being fitted with snowplows, too.



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ROB THOMPSON MANDATORY CREDIT: Rob Thompson/

Will there be enough snow to plow? Just in case, workers were tackling jobs such as attaching snowplows to dump trucks at the Department of Transportation's Richland Maintenance facility on Fairfield Road.



Title: **Haley declares State of Emergency**  
 Author: MICHAEL BURNS MDBURNS@GREENVILLENEWS.COM  
 Size: 102.76 column inches  
 Greenville, SC Circulation: 113473



# Haley declares State of Emergency

Winter storm warning for area until 1 p.m. today

MICHAEL BURNS

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The Upstate is buzzing with dreams of a white weekend, and that's likely to become reality by sunrise.

Meteorologists with the National Weather Service have raised predicted snowfall totals to 4 to 7 inches in Greenville County, with higher amounts in isolated areas. Rain and sleet will cut in totals south of Interstate 85 in Anderson County, where 3 to 4 inches is predicted.

Gov. Nikki Haley declared a State of Emergency ahead of the storm to mobilize the National Guard and additional

state resources should they be needed.

Sleet began to fall from Easley to Taylors by 2:30 p.m. Friday as temperatures dropped but remained above freezing, according to Weather Service meteorologist Scott Krentz, and the precipitation is expected to change over to snow before midnight.

School districts in Greenville, Pickens and Anderson counties have cancelled weekend activities while a winter storm warning is in effect for the entire area from 7 p.m. Friday through 1 p.m.

Saturday.

Road crews and electric providers have enacted special plans to respond to weather developments while retailers have seen typical runs.

Bread, milk, beer, wine, sleds and ice melt always go.

"They called it early enough to where we could prepare, so we got an extra load in this morning of all the winter

**See SNOW, Page 4A**

## Snow

Continued from Page 1A

necessities," said Michael Padgett, manager of the Ace Hardware store on Old Spartanburg Road in Greer, where eight sleds were being carried out the door by four customers at one point just before noon.

"We have been busy since the second we opened. We're probably 10 times busier than normal today, and the vast majority of it is all goods for the winter storm," Padgett said.

Sleds, snow shovels, ice melt and faucet covers were sold out at Duncan's Hardware on Augusta Street by 2 p.m. Friday, said owner Joe Freeman.

Bundles of firewood, propane lanterns and

hand warmers were also going fast. People seem to be expecting a lot of snow and that the snow will stick around for a while, Freeman said.

Chad Musick of The Community Tap on Wade Hampton Boulevard recommends a good stout or winter warmer to beer lovers, though he'd go with a box of wine, himself.

Standard white and wheat have been the most popular breads at local grocery stores.

There's potential for up to eight inches of snow in Greenville, up to 10 in Spartanburg, though sleet could mix in to bring down those amounts.

What sticks from precipitation expected to last until around 10 a.m. Satur-

day may remain a while as temperatures drop to 15 degrees Sunday morning, then reach only 34 before dropping to 14 Monday.

"We're going to have probably a good 10 to 12 hours of snowfall," Krentz said.

Sleet typically causes more problems on roads, power lines and trees.

"The models that we're looking at, they're showing the potential for sleet, but it's very minor," Krentz said. "It has those 5,000-foot temperatures right at freezing, not much above freezing. It's going to be touch-and-go. If we do get sleet, it looks like the cold air is going to take over pretty quick."

Jay Marett, deputy director of the Greenville

County Sheriff's Office Emergency Management Division, held a conference call with representatives of agencies and departments on local and state levels Friday in preparation.

"We're formulating a plan not only from the Greenville County perspective but up to the state level for if this thing grows beyond what we may be able to handle," Marett said. "We're a broker of resources, so to speak. If somebody has a need that they can't fill, we have the connections and the relationships in place to find that resource and pull it in if we don't have it ourselves."

"We're a very resource-rich county, so very often if this subdivi-

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sion doesn't have it, we can go to another that does and pull that in. We work together quite well like that."

The city of Greenville's public works department is pre-treating bridges and overpasses with brine to improve traction on trafficked surfaces. Parking will not be permitted on Main Street from the Hyatt block to Fluor Field beginning Friday at 11:30 p.m. through Saturday at 8 a.m. in order to allow crews to remove accumulations.

Depending on the amount and type of precipitation, crews will work off an established priority list of locations to clear and treat as necessary, officials said. The list includes the 35 bridges located within the city limits, major thoroughfares with steep grades, parking garage entrances and major intersections.

Motorists are advised to use extreme caution if they must travel on icy roads and to treat intersections without functioning traffic signals as all-way stops.

People in the Golden Strip also were stocking up on supplies.

Ben Duncan, owner of Simpsonville's Ace Hardware on 30 Ray E. Talley Ct, said he's already sold close to 1,500 gallons of propane. He is out of shovels and has a few dozen faucet covers remaining.

"It's been pretty crazy around here," Duncan said. "Any time we have a possible storm like this people just panic."

Gayle Gillespie who drove to the store from Fountain Inn was picking up a jug of Safe Step ice melt. She said she'll need it for her steps. Her house

sits up on stilts.

There are five jugs left.

Near the entrance of the store, a space lays bare from another item that sold out quickly.

"We're sold completely out of sleds. We sold about 200 yesterday and about 120 today," Duncan said.

That was before noon.

He urged residents to wrap their faucets and to, "Just stay safe, it's going to be cold," he said.

A few miles away, Abby Bubb is preparing for the potential storm differently. She maneuvers the isles at the Simpsonville Library, trying to balance the stack of children's books and DVDs she's picked out for her children.

Originally from the Northeast, she said her family's looking forward to some snow.

"We're just cleared our schedule and plan on staying home," Bubb said. "Snow does not scare us at all and we're just going to bundle up the best we can and enjoy it."

Staff writer Tesalon Felicien contributed to this report.

Follow Michael Burns on Twitter @MikeAtGvlNwz.

## Winter tips

### Safely Heat Your Home

» **Install smoke alarms** on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas.

» **Test the batteries in your smoke alarms once a month**, and change them if they're not working.

» **Create an escape plan** that includes two exits from each room and practice it until everyone in your household can get out in less than two minutes.

» **Follow the "three feet" rule** and keep children, pets and flammable items at least three feet from heating equipment. Turn off portable space heaters when you leave the room and when you go to sleep.

» **Use gas wisely** and never use a cooking

range or oven to heat your home. Four percent of Americans admit to having used a gas stove to heat their home.

» **Use flashlights, not candles** because battery-operated flashlights or lanterns are safer than candles during power outages

### Protect Yourself from Freezing Temperatures

Avoid unnecessary exposure to the cold. Be aware of both the temperature and the wind chill when planning outdoor activities. When you prepare to go outside in severe cold weather, please remember the following:

» **Wear a hat**, preferably one that covers your ears, as most heat is lost through your head

» **Dress in layers** to help retain heat; remove layers as needed if you become too warm.

Mittens provide more warmth to your hands than gloves.

» **Wear waterproof, insulated boots** to help avoid hypothermia or frostbite by keeping your feet warm and dry and to maintain your footing in ice and snow.

» **Get out of wet clothes immediately** and warm the core body temperature with a blanket or warm fluids like hot cider or soup. Avoid drinking caffeine or alcohol if you expect you or someone you are trying to help has hypothermia or frostbite.

» **Recognize the symptoms of hypothermia** that can be a serious medical condition: confusion, dizziness, exhaustion, and severe shivering. Seek medical attention immediately if you have these symptoms.

» **Recognize frostbite warning signs:** gray, white or yellow skin discoloration, numbness, waxy feeling skin. Seek medical attention immediately if you have these symptoms.

» **Create a disaster supplies kit** — Get together lifesaving items in both your home and vehicle. Visit [www.redcross.org/prepare](http://www.redcross.org/prepare) for more information on disaster preparedness.

### Prevent Frozen Pipes

Many homeowners may not be ready for frigid weather either. Now is the time to protect your house pipes from freezing and bursting. With the cold weather upon us, preventive action may make all the difference.

» **Let the cold water drip from faucets** served by exposed pipes or pipes in exterior walls. Running water through the pipe - even at a trickle - helps prevent pipes from freezing

» **Keep garage doors closed** if there are water supply lines in the garage or in walls adjacent to the garage.

» Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to **allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing**. Be sure to move any harmful cleaners and household chemicals up out of the reach of children.

» **Keep the thermostat set to the same temperature both during the day and at**

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**night.** By temporarily suspending the use of lower nighttime temperatures, you may incur a higher heating bill, but you can prevent a much more costly repair job if pipes freeze and burst.

» If you will be going away during cold weather, **leave the heat on in your home**, set to a

temperature no lower than 55°F.

#### **Pets and Animals**

Bring pets/companion animals inside during winter weather. Move other animals or livestock to sheltered areas and make sure that their access to food and water is not blocked by snow drifts, ice or other obstacles.

*Source: American Red Cross*



LAUREN PETRACCA/STAFF

**A City of Greenville truck sprays brine Friday on E. Washington Street in preparation for snow.**

Title: **New deer regulations begin in 2017 season**

Author:

Size: 24.95 column inches

Batesburg-Leesville, SC Circulation: 3651



# New deer regulations begin in 2017 season

Governor Haley signed Senate Bill 454 into law on June 8, which makes some sweeping new changes to South Carolina's deer hunting. While the law will not go into effect until the 2017 season, it has many outdoorsmen talking already.

So what's in the new law, and what does it mean to hunters? One of the biggest changes is that starting with the 2017 deer hunting season, all harvested deer must be tagged, including bucks (antlered deer). This is a first for the state of South Carolina, and is one way in which the SCDNR can monitor that any given hunter is sticking to the new deer limits.

And what are those limits? The short answer is, with the purchase of a South Carolina hunting license and big game permit, 11 total deer. This includes eight antlerless deer which can only be taken on certain dates, and three bucks which can be taken on any legal deer hunting day.

But, for an additional fee, hunters can also purchase additional antlerless deer tags at five dollars per tag. Hunters may purchase up to four of these tags. For the same price, they can also purchase two

more antlered deer tags, and unlike the three that come with the basic license fee, these two deer tags carry antler restrictions. Any deer killed with these tags must have a minimum of four points on one antler, or at least a 12-inch inside antler spread.

That brings the total number of deer allowed by each hunter to 17, all of which must be tagged after harvest.

For farmers, land managers, and plantations with large amounts of acreage, the Deer Quota Program is in effect. This requires an application with a fifty dollar fee per tract of land. The number of deer hunters can harvest on these properties varies by acreage and is determined by the SCDNR.

A study will be conducted for a 4-year period under the new regulations. A new report will be issued to the Chairman of the Senate Fish, Game, and Forestry Committee and the Chairman of the House Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee. (*Courtesy of Carolinasportsman.com*)