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148 SCDOT Reviews Flood Damage and Costs with SCDOT Commission

Interim SCDOT Secretary Christy A. Hall reported the damage costs to South Carolina's Highway System as a result of the 1,000 year flood stands at \$137 million.

Of that \$137 million figure, the federal share amounts to \$88 million. FEMA funds only amount to \$25 million of the federal funds. The state share of the costs total \$49 million.

Approximately \$20 million of the state share will be used for latent flood damage that could occur in the next 12-18 months. The Secretary presented this information as part of a review of the October flood to the SCDOT Commission at its December 3rd meeting in Columbia.

The cost figures are the result of SCDOT's pre-storm plan to contain costs and maximize reimbursements. That plan included:

- Using SCDOT's Maintenance forces for emergency response and recovery operations.
- Pre-positioning contracts for faster response and higher reimbursements, particularly in the area of debris collection and removal.
- The goal was to repair highway facilities as much as possible and replace only when the damage was beyond repair.

Secretary Hall said the goal was to reopen roads as quickly as possible. "Our mission was to restore the roads and bridges to their previous condition before the flood and ensure they were safe for the public to use once more," said Hall. A summary of SCDOT's recovery operations completed (as of 12/3/15) include:

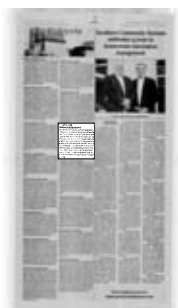
- Peak closures reached 541 on one day (October 5)
 - Current closures as of 12/3 total only 58 in less than 60 days after the flood event.
 - Of the 58 remaining closures, 32 active projects are in place to reopen those facilities.
 - 26 of the remaining closures involve dams which SCDOT does not own.
- Secretary Hall recounted SCDOT's "work list" during the recovery:
- Work was performed on 900 sites on the state highway system.
 - 221 of those sites involved bridges.
 - 105 of those bridges have been repaired and placed back in service following two inspections for safety.
 - Three of the bridges being replaced were scheduled for replacement prior to the flood.
 - An additional 18 bridges are beyond repair and will be replaced.

Secretary Hall said the ability to accomplish the recovery work so far and return the state system to its pre-storm condition in the past 60 days was due to the efforts of the SCDOT Team, contractors, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Team, FEMA, Team South Carolina partners and Governor Nikki Haley. "We also appreciate the patience of the public as we and our partners work to restore the state's highway system," said Hall.

A two-slide recap of SCDOT's estimated total event costs are in this link: <http://www.scdot-transfer.org/SCDOTPhotos/StateHighwayFlood-Costs.pdf>.



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Offshore drilling opposed

Hundreds of small businesses opposed to offshore oil and gas drilling are calling for Gov. Nikki Haley to switch positions and oppose the search for fossil fuels along the south Atlantic coast. Small business leaders delivered a letter to the governor asking that she withdraw South Carolina from federal consideration as a site for offshore drilling. Representatives of more than 400 businesses signed the letter, many of them small companies that rely on natural resources and tourism to make a living.



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Interfaith Partners of South Carolina announced the launch of **S.C. Interfaith Harmony Month (January)** December 29, State House Rotunda. During the month of January, many congregations and religious groups will hold special events and services during which they will welcome people who are not members of their group to visit, including Introduction to Nichiren Buddhism, Wednesday, January 13; Women of Many Faiths discussion and refreshments, Thursday, January 14; Teen Interfaith Service Weekend, Saturday, January 16; Baha'i Open Service, Sunday, January 17; I Shall Not Be Silent Film, Monday, January 18; Facing Fear in Our Houses of Worship, Tuesday, January 19; Native American Winter Storytelling, Wednesday, January 20; Stories of the Prophets From the Holy Qu'ran, Friday, January 22; Musical Shabbat
Worship, Friday, January 22; Tree of Life Congregation 120th Anniversary Concert, Saturday, January 23; Opening Season of a Season For Non-Violence, Saturday, January 30; 2016-The Year For Interfaith, monthly starting Sunday, January 31; USC Methodist Student Network program, Sunday, January 31; Dances of Universal Peace, Friday, February 5; and Lights of Nut Pagan Ceremony, Sunday, February 7. For the fourth year in a row, Governor Nikki R. Haley has declared January to be South Carolina Interfaith Harmony Month. Interfaith Partners will host a special presentation on Tuesday, January 19 called "Facing Fear in Our Houses of Worship." 798-8007.

State comes through death disaster with hope in 2015



SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTO

Sumter Fire Department uses a ladder truck to reach drivers stranded on Liberty Street at Swan Lake-Iris Gardens after heavy rains flooded the area on Oct. 4.

Shootings, debate, flooding test residents' ability to cope

**BY JEFFREY COLLINS
and BRUCE SMITH**

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — The police shooting of an unarmed black man in North Charleston. The killing of nine people during Bible study at a historic black church in Charleston. Historic flooding that dropped nearly half the yearly rainfall in less than two days. The Confederate flag flown on the Statehouse grounds coming down after multiple other efforts had failed.

The past year has been one of significant change for South Carolina. Here are a series of snapshots about the key moments and figures in 2015:

WALTER SCOTT

Before his death was shown around the world and he became a symbol of the ongoing debate about police shootings of unarmed blacks,

Walter Scott was just a 50-year-old forklift driver at a warehouse and a father behind on his child support payments.

He was pulled over on April 4 for a broken brake light by North Charleston Officer Michael Slager. People go to jail all the time in South Carolina for missing child support payments, and Scott, who was behind on his, called his mother from his car to say he might need her help getting bail.

Moments later, he ran from his car and around the corner. Slager ran after him toward a vacant field. A passer-by captured what happened next on his cellphone. The video showed Slager firing eight shots at Scott's back. Scott was struck by several bullets and fell.

The shooting happened in a city whose officers faced years of accusations of mistreating minorities.

Scott's family called for calm, especially after Slager's swift arrest,

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saying they did not want Scott's memory soiled by violence.

JOE RILEY

In his 40th and final year as Charleston's mayor, Joe Riley faced his most trying time.

The man who steered the city through Hurricane Hugo in 1989 found his toughest moments on a hot, sticky summer night when what he called "pure, pure concen-

trated evil" came to a church in his 345-year-old city.

After a call at 9:30 p.m. June 17, Riley hurried to historic Emanuel AME Church where nine black parishioners had been shot and killed during a Bible study.

In the days after, Riley again became the face of the historic city,

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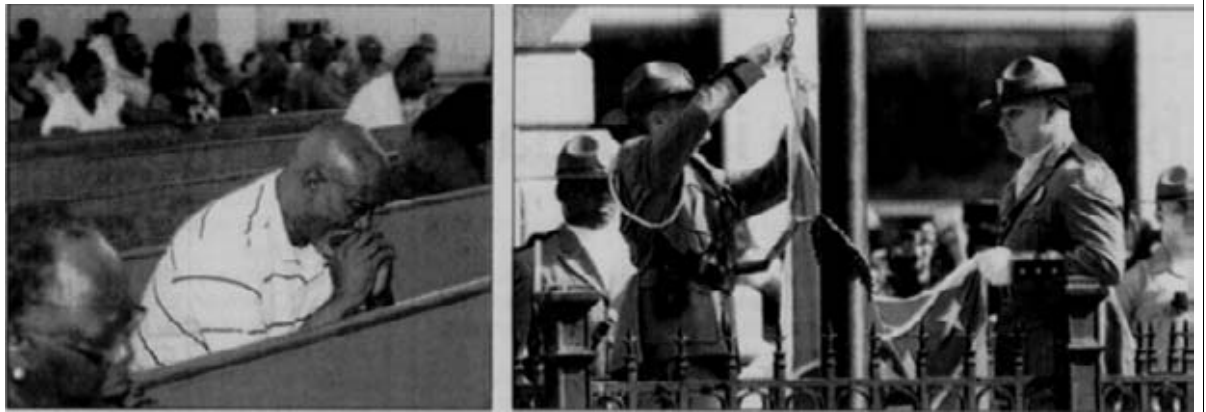
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SUMTER ITEM FILE PHOTO

AP FILE PHOTO

Above left, James Rodgers joins with Sumter community members at Mount Pisgah AME Church in Sumter in June as they pray for those involved in the Charleston shooting of nine worshippers. An honor guard, above right, from South Carolina Highway Patrol, lowers the Confederate battle flag as it is removed from the Capitol grounds in Columbia on July 10.





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comforting victims, attending funerals and being a voice of calm.

"I knew that in this incident everything I did, everything I said, had to be perfect" to ensure calm prevailed, Riley said.

The city — and indeed the whole nation — seemed to come together after the shootings, with thousands gathering on sweeping Ravenel Bridge over the Cooper River in a show of unity several days later.

Riley has made it clear that he will continue to work on the issue of gun violence after he leaves office.

"We do not want to encroach on law-abiding citizens' rights to own a gun, but we must prevent guns from falling into the wrong hands," Riley said at an event earlier this month at Emanuel to announce a new effort to curb gun violence.

The suspected killer in the Charleston shootings, Dylan Roof, was able to buy the gun that was used in the shootings because of a record-keeping problem that prevented federal officials from disqualifying him before a three-day deadline expired.

RUSSELL OTT

Russell Ott knew the Confederate flag flying outside the South Carolina Statehouse had to come down, and it had to come down now — not later.

The eyes of the nation and the world were squarely focused on his place of work, and the little known 37-year-old House member who took over his dad's seat back in 2013 was having trouble believing what was happening. He hadn't made a passionate speech imploring his colleagues to let go of the symbol of a bygone era, but he thought it was time for it to happen, and he didn't want to see the Legislature and the state blow their chance of having it happen and risk looking like fools or obstructionists.

Gov. Nikki Haley had said less than a week after the slayings at Emanuel AME Church that the flag should come

down and the state Senate had reached the same conclusion.

But as the sun set on July 8, the people who wanted the flag removed were stunned. Flag supporters in the House suddenly appeared to have enough votes for an amendment to the bill backed by Haley and the Senate that would postpone its passage, keeping the rebel banner flying outside the chambers. The flag supporters wanted a guarantee that the flag would be sent to a museum, and they were willing to hold up the process for it, even if it meant going against the rising tide of support to bring it down.

Ott knew there was an arcane, rarely used way that he could get the flag supporters what they wanted and also keep the state on pace to bring the banner down. He and his colleagues went to work, twisting arms, holding last-minute votes and watching the clock tick past midnight to allow them to vote on the final measure during a new day.

At 1 a.m. the bill finally passed. On Friday, July 10, the flag finally came down. In South Carolina, however, the debate about the fate of the flag still rages on.

MAJ. GEN. ROBERT LIVINGSTON

It was the most important

mission of South Carolina National Guard commander Maj. Gen. Robert Livingston's life, directing thousands of soldiers and civilians during South Carolina's historic floods.

Livingston was a true soldier working with Gov. Nikki Haley to carry out her wishes and by her side when she gave the public updates.

But people across the state left little doubt that Livingston's preparation in the days and years before the floods, and his decisive action as the disaster unfolded, prevented a terrible situation from being so much worse.

"We were rescuing people at the same time we were putting things together back in Columbia," Livingston said.

Livingston helped get clean water into the pipes at Columbia hospitals, worried about how many critically ill patients might die if they had to close and move them. His soldiers saved dozens of lives with air and boat rescues and helped repair washed out roads and bridges. They averted what would have been a disaster on top of a disaster by keeping Columbia's water system running and water coming from almost 400,000 taps by fixing a canal breach and laying pipe to get water into the treatment plant.

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148 + 280 Company expands operations in Manning

JIM HILLEY

jim@theitem.com

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More than 25 new jobs will be created in Clarendon County when Advanta Industries Inc. expands its facility, according to a news release from the office of South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley.

The company is investing \$2.6 million to expand the facility, which will create 26 new jobs during the next five years, the release said.

The company will construct a 30,000-square-foot addition to its facility located at 1799 Ram Bay Road in Manning, the release said, and the company will also upgrade the plant's equipment by installing a new sheet and tube laser for cutting all types of steel.

John Wilson, production control manager at the Manning facility, said the plant makes industrial racks, mostly for automobile manufacturers such as General Motors, Ford and BMW.

He said that right now, the plant employs about 30 people.

Wilson said he expects the addition to be done in about six months, and the expanded operation up and running by the end of 2016.

The South Carolina Coordinating Council for Economic Development has reportedly approved a \$200,000 grant to Clarendon County to assist with the costs of real property improvements related to the project.

"We take great pride in our existing industry program in Clarendon County," said Clarendon County Council Chairman Dwight Stewart. "Any time we can help one of our industries grow, it's a great testament of our pro-business

climate. On behalf of Clarendon County Council, we wish them much success."

Advanta President Merle Grams III said Clarendon County is a great place to grow the business.

"We are very pleased to announce the expansion of our South Carolina facility. We continue to see growth and opportunity here in South Carolina, and we are excited

to be a part of it."

Hiring for the new positions is expected to begin in the third quarter of 2016, the release said.

Anyone interested in jobs at the facility may send resumes to jobs@advanta.net or visit the site and complete an application.

For more information on the company, visit www.advantaindustries.com.





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148 Secessionist gathering authorized

Group to commemorate 155th anniversary of split with Union

COLUMBIA (AP) — A Statehouse gathering commemorating South Carolina's 1860 secession from the Union will be held Sunday after state officials reinstated a permit they canceled a week ago.

Gov. Nikki Haley said Friday she asked the state Department of Administration to reinstate the Secessionist Party's reservation.

"The governor believes that the Statehouse grounds belong to all people, whether she agrees with their views or not," said Haley spokeswoman Chaney Adams. "She also believes that people's constitutional rights mean something, and that certainly includes the rights to free speech and free assembly."

Secessionist Party founder James Bessenger called the permit's reinstatement a victory for the First Amendment. His group had threat-

ened to sue the state.

Bessenger applied Oct. 28 to hold a Sovereignty Day Rally on the 155th anniversary of South Carolina adopting its Ordinance of Secession. Permission for the rally was granted last month, but the reservation was canceled Dec. 10 after the Department of Public Safety raised security concerns, according to documents from the Department of Administration.



HALEY

"We have seen what can happen when opposing groups are allowed on Statehouse grounds," Department spokeswoman Sherri Iacobelli said last week.

Legislators have said state officials didn't use common sense when they allowed the Ku Klux Klan and a group affiliated with the New Black Panther Party to hold overlapping rallies July 18 at the Statehouse, resulting in violence despite a massive police presence.



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Valentines for Vets

Starting Jan. 1, the American Heritage Girls Troop SC9212 will be collecting boxes of Valentine's Day cards and/or heart lollipop candy donations to help their annual Valentines For Veterans Service Project. Last year, the troop was recognized with a letter from Gov. Nikki Haley for their efforts of making over 1,400 valentines for Veterans in the Lowcountry area. If you would like to help with their project, you can send donations of cards and/or candy to Palmetto Land Baptist Church on Tuesday nights at 6:30 p.m. starting in January. Or mail to: AHG Troop SC9212, 114 Tomaka Drive, Summerville, SC 29483. This is our fourth year with this project, and we have sent more than 2,000 cards.



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OFFSHORE DRILLING 148 + 59

Opposition group delivers petitions to governor's office

BY JASON LESLEY

COASTAL OBSERVER

Opponents of oil and natural gas exploration off South Carolina's coast have enlisted businesses to try and convince Gov. Nikki Haley to withdraw the state from the federal government's plans for drilling.

A group representing more than 400 state businesses delivered a letter to Haley this week that said seismic testing and drilling would harm the tourism economy.

"It couldn't have gone any better," said Rick Baumann, owner of Murrells Inlet Seafood. Representatives of Stop Oil

Drilling in the Atlantic presented a letter to the governor's chief of staff. "The folks we met with were courteous and asked great questions."

Peg Howell of North Litchfield has been a leading voice against drilling by citing her experiences working on oil rigs for Chevron. After leaving the petroleum industry, she founded Howell Consulting Group. "I chose to move to the South Carolina coast for my business because of the quality of life here," she said. "When harm comes to

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Drilling | Opponents petition governor for halt

FROM FRONT PAGE

our coast, as it has at every other coast where oil and gas have been developed, people won't locate new-economy businesses here."

More than 25 coastal communities including Pawleys Island, Georgetown and Myrtle Beach have passed resolutions against offshore drilling. The U.S. Department of Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management considers governors' positions on offshore drilling when deciding which states to include in offshore drilling plans.

Proponents of offshore drilling have pushed back, using the results of a Harris Poll commissioned by the American Petroleum Institute that says 68 percent of South Carolina voters support offshore drilling for oil and natural gas. The statewide poll of 607 voters last month found 92 percent of agreeing that increased production of domestic oil and natural gas could help strengthen America's energy security. The poll also found that 90 percent feel it is important to produce more oil and natural gas at home; 86 percent agree that producing more domestic oil and natural gas could help lower energy costs for U.S. consumers; and 84 percent agree that it could help strengthen

America's national security.

"Voters in South Carolina know developing more of America's domestic energy can lead to more jobs, increased government revenues and help put downward pressure on fuel prices," said Erik Milito, a group director for the American Petroleum Institute. "As lease sales and exploratory activity are completed, job creation and revenue to the government could all begin years before the first barrel goes to market. And, with the government only planning to lease areas outside of 50 miles from the coast, any activity would not be visible from shore."

The 50-mile buffer proposed by BOEM has been eliminated in legislation pushed through the Senate Energy Committee by Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski. The Offshore Production and Energizing National Security Act contains the oil and gas industry's legislative goals of exporting crude oil and mandating Atlantic drilling.

The U.S. House endorsed the legislation, but some members are beginning to send up red flags. Congressman Mark Sanford has signed a letter with 30 other House members, requesting BOEM halt the permitting and review pro-

cess for potential seismic testing. Specifically, the letter asks BOEM to prepare a new environmental review of proposed testing that takes into account the full extent of the impacts — ranging from economic to ecological — caused by seismic airgun testing.

The Southern Environmental Law Center is disputing the potential economic impact of offshore drilling in a report this week. "The oil industry is asking our elected officials to jeopardize the tourism and fishing economies that mean so much to the Southeast with promises of jobs that have no basis in reality," said Sierra Weaver, senior attorney at the Southern Environmental Law Center. "Communities all along the coast have already said that there's too much to lose and too little to gain from offshore drilling. This report confirms what these coastal residents have known."

Sandra Bundy, a Realtor in Murrells Inlet, said oil drilling will harm property values. "People come to the coast for our unique quality of life and for our special places," she said. "Those people don't want to buy houses or rent houses in an industrial area, where there has been a spill, or even where there is the perception of a spill."



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Senators appeal to congress for relief for farmers

BY MICHAEL DUKE
news@kingstreenews.com

On December 7, farmers traveled to South Carolina Statehouse to appeal to Governor Nikki Haley to ask congress for money to help them recover from an estimated \$376 million in crop damage due to October's historic flood. At the same time, in a letter to the governor, the Senate Special Committee appealed for help.

In the letter, the lawmakers ask Haley to request the congressional delegation to provide disaster relief funding options including supplemental appropriations, block grants and any other form of disaster assistance for the farmers. They also appealed to her to consider the timing of the ongoing budget negotiations in Washington and to request the assistance in time for the delegation to take

appropriate action.

"I don't get it," said Senator Ronnie Sabb who co-signed the letter submitted by Senator Hugh Leatherman. "For 11 months out of the year they put their money in the ground, then for the one month window that they have to harvest and make their money back and try to make a profit. It's unfortunate this flood came at the 12th month when they were getting ready to make some money so it's wrong to compare them to restaurants who are down for a month and those places have been making money all along. But these farmers all they been doing is spending money and investing, now all is lost."

In a December 1, press conference Haley said farmers have or should have insurance to cover their losses. She also sent a letter to South Carolina

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Farmers traveled to the statehouse

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Congressional Delegation but noted in the letter that properly underinsured farmers should not lose their business because of the flood.

She has asked the state's con-

gressional delegation for \$140 million to help homeowners, many of whom did not have flood insurance.

"The experts I've talked to say if the farmers have the most premium package that are out

there they still lost money," said Sabb.

"That insurance is not made to make them whole in terms of their profits and other things. Those guys have lost the shirts off their backs."



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Bill Fleming awarded Order of the Palmetto

William L. "Bill" Fleming, Sr., was presented The Order of the Palmetto by Ambassador David H. Wilkins on behalf of Governor Nikki Haley at a luncheon of The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina's Winter Conference at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Greenville, S.C.

"I am truly honored and humbled to receive this prestigious award and I thank Governor Haley and her entire staff for this recognition," Fleming said. "I am proud of the opportunities that the cooperatives have provided for the people and the communities in South Carolina, and I look forward to seeing the continued growth and success for many years to come."

The Order of the Palmetto is the state's highest civilian honor awarded to citizens of South Carolina for extraordinary lifetime service and achievements of national or statewide significance. The Order of the Palmetto is a once in a lifetime achievement.

Fleming began working in the electric industry in 1970 with Carolina Power and Light Company. In October of 1971, Bill began working with Pee Dee Electric Cooperative in Darlington, S.C., and served there for 24 years as Vice President of Office and Customer Service and

Government Relations.

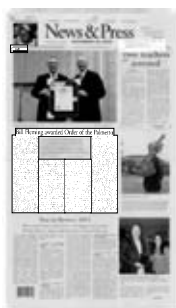
In January of 1996, Bill became President and CEO of Marlboro Electric Cooperative in Bennettsville, S.C. until his retirement on August 1, 2014. During his tenure at Marlboro Electric, revenues for the cooperative more than tripled, and he played a crucial role in bringing over 1,800 jobs and \$636,185,000 in capital investment to Marlboro and Dillon counties.

Also during his time as President and CEO, Bill was instrumental in the implementation of the Marlboro County Economic Development Partnership Board, where he served as chairman from 1997-1999 and 2003-2005. He also served as a member of the Dillon County Economic Development Public-Private Partnership, the Carolinas I-95 Mega Site Board, the Palmetto Economic Development Corporation Board, the Cooperative Electric Energy Utility Supply Board, the Central Electric Power Cooperative Executive Board, and the Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina Board, where he was the secretary/treasurer in 2013-2014. Bill was instrumental in the development of Marlboro Development Team, a sub-

sidiary of Marlboro Electric which has as its main goal to provide economic growth for South Carolina, especially in the Marlboro and Dillon County areas.

In his community, Bill served as a member of the Darlington County School District Board of Education for 10 years, as chairman for many years, and played a vital role in founding the Mayo Magnet School for Science and Math. He has also been a member of the Board of Directors for First Citizens Bank of Darlington, Darlington County Chamber of Commerce, Marlboro County Chamber of Commerce, and the Kiwanis Club of Darlington, Rotary Club of Bennettsville, and the Darlington County Airport Commission where he now serves as Chairman. In 2000, Bill was also named the South Carolina Ambassador for Economic Development by Governor Jim Hodges.

Bill has been active in churches in Darlington and Bennettsville as a Sunday school teacher, Assistant Sunday School Superintendent, Deacon and Elder. He is currently a member of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Darlington. Bill and his wife, Jenny, have three children and four grandchildren.



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"I am proud of the opportunities that the cooperatives have provided for the people and the communities in South Carolina, and I look forward to seeing the continued growth and success for many years to come."

William L. "Bill" Fleming, Sr.

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Pictured left to right: Former U.S. Ambassador to Canada and former South Carolina Speaker of the House, David Wilkins awards Mr. Bill Fleming the Order of the Palmetto.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

