

From: Symmes, Brian
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Subject: Morning Clips - Tuesday, December 17, 2013

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

Times and Democrat: 3 S.C. announcements total over 2,300 jobs

http://thetandd.com/news/local/state-and-regional/s-c-announcements-total-over-jobs/article_f6d0fabe-66b0-11e3-9da7-001a4bcf887a.html

High-tech jobs in Berkeley County and textile-manufacturing jobs in Lancaster, plus new service-related employment for the Grand Strand, were announced Monday by the S.C. Department of Commerce. Total job creation is forecast at more than 2,300 over five years.

Note: Gov. Nikki Haley will join Benefitfocus President and CEO Shawn Jenkins Tuesday for the ground-breaking ceremony in Berkeley. On Monday, she said, "Benefitfocus is an excellent example of innovation in our state. Today's announcement highlights the entrepreneurial spirit that keeps South Carolina leading the way for the technology industry on the East Coast. We celebrate their continued investment in South Carolina and the creation of 1,200 new jobs."

Post and Courier: Charleston software firm Benefitfocus adding 1,200 tech jobs on Daniel Island

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20131216/PC05/131219540/1177/charleston-software-firm-benefitfocus-adding-1200-tech-jobs-on-daniel-island>

John McDermott

In a huge boost for the region's technology scene, fast-growing software maker Benefitfocus Inc. is expanding its Daniel Island campus again, with plans to add 1,200 jobs and a big slug of new office space. The total investment is \$60 million, and it would triple the size of the company's Charleston workforce, said Mason Holland, co-founder and executive chairman.

Note: A groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled for Tuesday. Among the expected guests are Gov. Nikki Haley. "Benefitfocus is an excellent example of innovation in our state," Haley said in statement Monday.

Times and Democrat: Benefitfocus to expand HQ campus in Berkeley County, create 1,200 jobs

http://thetandd.com/business/benefitfocus-to-expand-hq-campus-in-berkeley-county-create-jobs/article_5d55c952-66a4-11e3-af80-0019bb2963f4.html

Benefitfocus, Inc., a leading provider of cloud-based benefits software solutions, on Monday announced that it will break ground on a building project that will expand the size of its technology campus on Daniel Island in Berkeley County from 13 acres to 40 acres. Gov. Nikki Haley will join Benefitfocus President and CEO Shawn Jenkins Tuesday for the ground-breaking ceremony and in announcing the anticipated creation of 1,200 new, high-tech jobs in South Carolina.

Note: "Benefitfocus is an excellent example of innovation in our state," said Gov. Haley. "Today's announcement highlights the entrepreneurial spirit that keeps South Carolina leading the way for the technology industry on the East Coast. We celebrate their continued investment in South Carolina and the creation of 1,200 new jobs."

Associated Press: Lowcountry software company to add 1,200 jobs

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=601wL5gf

A Berkeley County software company plans to add 1,200 jobs as it expands its Daniel Island headquarters. Benefitfocus invited Gov. Nikki Haley to a groundbreaking ceremony Tuesday for its new building. The campus-like headquarters will triple the size of the company's headquarters. It will have walking paths and connectivity between buildings and is expected to open in 2015. Benefitfocus was founded in a single office in Mount Pleasant in 2000. It provides software to help companies manage benefits for their workers.

The State: SC National Guard Soldiers Return From Afghanistan

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=kpZohsX5

Jeff Wilkinson

More than 150 South Carolina National Guard Soldiers returned from Afghanistan on Monday in a ceremony held at Columbia Metropolitan Airport. The unit mobilized in February and deployed to Afghanistan after a month of training in Texas. During their deployment, the 122nd Engineers supported route clearance missions and conducted construction projects in and around eastern and northern Afghanistan, according to a release.

Note: Gov. Nikki Haley's husband, Michael Haley, and more than 40 other members of a Guard agriculture-training unit were welcomed home last week. Haley was the first spouse of a sitting governor to deploy to a combat zone with the National Guard, according to military groups.

The State: Court: Gov. Nikki Haley, SC officials can be sued for Occupy arrests

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/12/16/3162528/court-gov-nikki-haley-state-officials.html#storylink=cpy>

Andrew Shain

Gov. Nikki Haley and state law enforcement agencies can be sued by Occupy Columbia protestors who were arrested in 2011 after living for a month on the S.C. State House grounds, a federal appeals court ruled Monday. Haley and the chiefs of the state Bureau of Public Safety and state Department of Public Safety had asked the court to protect them from civil legal penalties, saying they only were carrying out their duties.

Note: "There are still several steps to go in order to resolve this matter in the courts," Haley spokesman Doug Mayer said.

Note: "We continue to stand behind the decision made two years ago – and which is still the rule today – that the State House grounds are not meant to be used as a public toilet or campground," Mayer said.

2014 Campaign Cycle News:

Aiken Standard: Senate candidate Connor addresses Aiken County Tea Party

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20131217/AIK0101/131219500/1007/AIK0101/senate-candidate-connor-addresses-aiken-county-tea-party>

Teddy Kulmala

Bill Connor, a former lieutenant governor candidate and one of four Republicans challenging U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham in next June's primary, addressed the Aiken County Tea Party on Monday and made his case for why he's the best candidate to oust the two-term incumbent. Connor, an attorney from Orangeburg and a U.S. Army veteran, ran unsuccessfully for lieutenant governor in 2010 and officially filed last month to run against Graham. He sold his Tea Party and military credentials to a room of about 30 people on Monday night, many of whom wore buttons that said "Lose Lindsey." Connor recalled speaking at the very first Tea Party events in South Carolina.

Opinion / Editorial Roundup:

Times and Democrat: Helping on grand scale – or doing just what you can

http://thetandd.com/news/opinion/helping-on-grand-scale-or-doing-just-what-you-can/article_490b6168-66b4-11e3-ad38-0019bb2963f4.html

Editorial

ISSUE: Helping others at Christmas; OUR VIEW: 'Glimmer of Hope' needed for many in South Carolina; Before someone wraps up the story and puts a political bow on it because both public officials are running for re-election, let's state that fostering and recognizing good will at Christmas is not unique among politicians and parties. First, there is the reminder that Gov. Nikki Haley has encouraged South Carolinians to help others this season through the S.C. Christmas Challenge, which she issued at the annual Governor's Carolighting.

Note: "If every family in South Carolina commits to doing this, we would have 5 million kind acts across our state. How special would that be?" Haley said.

Post and Courier: Obamacare earns public's disdain

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20131217/PC1002/131219529/1021/obamacare-earns-public-disdain>

Editorial
An Associated Press-GfK poll released last week reports that a large majority of Americans are blaming the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act for making health insurance much less affordable. But the AP story added that's "even though the trend toward leaner coverage predates the law's passage." Robert Blendon, a professor at the Harvard School of Public Health, gave this similarly fuzzy assessment of the poll: "Rightly or wrongly, people with private insurance looking at next year are really worried about what is

going to happen."

The State: SC Legislature Needs To Crack Down On Abuse Of State Planes, Vehicles

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=LPNeI9xX

Editorial

Rep. Bill Chumley clearly squandered tax dollars when he sent the state plane up to Washington this spring to pick up a celebrity with no expertise on the subject to testify before his subcommittee on his purely symbolic bill that clearly was going to be approved. So we're glad that, eight months after the fact, the House Ethics Committee has decided to look into the matter, even if it is a pretty transparent effort to convince the public that legislators are up to the task of policing their own ethics. Which, almost by definition, they never will be.

Greenville News: State still needs to improve health

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2013312170001>

Editorial

South Carolina did marginally better this year in a national ranking of the states' health, but still was near the bottom in overall health despite making significant improvements in some areas. The most important thing to learn from the rankings is that South Carolina still struggles mightily in terms of public health and needs to make decisions carefully and thoughtfully to help improve the health of state residents, especially the poor.

Rock Hill Herald: County underestimates road project costs

<http://www.heraldonline.com/2013/12/16/5509694/county-underestimates-road-project.html>

Editorial

News that York County engineers need \$3.2 million more than anticipated to complete road improvements on White Street in Rock Hill is regrettable. The county, which decided in 2007 to take over management of the Pennies for Progress road program, shouldn't make mistakes like this. The White Street project will stretch from Dave Lyle Boulevard to Constitution Boulevard and will include new lanes, an improved sidewalk and changes to make a railroad crossing safer. The project is one of 14 approved by county voters in a 2003 referendum.

S.C. Federal Delegation News:

WJBF: Sen. Lindsey Graham Says He'll Vote Against Budget Agreement

<http://www.wjbf.com/story/24231433/sen-lindsey-graham-says-hell-vote-against-budget-agreement>

U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham is joining Senators Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire and Roger Wicker of Mississippi to find other ways to replace a provision in the budget agreement that cuts retirement benefits for military retirees. In a statement today, the three senators sent a letter to their colleagues to work together to find \$6.3 billion to replace the provision that would cut benefits for current and future military retirees. The statement goes on to say they were prepared to support the budget agreement if the provision is replaced with acceptable alternative savings.

Spartanburg Herald Journal: Conservative group Americans for Prosperity starts SC chapter

<http://www.goupstate.com/article/20131216/ARTICLES/312171003/1088/sports?Title=Conservative-group-Americans-for-Prosperity-starts-SC-chapter>

Americans for Prosperity officially launched its South Carolina chapter during an event in Greenville Monday. AFP President Tim Phillips, a political activist and Spartanburg native, and U.S. Rep. Jeff Duncan announced the state chapter during a kickoff party. South Carolina is the group's 35th state chapter, and nationwide, there are about 2.1 million members — 16,000 of those are in South Carolina. South Carolina Director Dave Schwartz said Americans for Prosperity is the nation's largest grassroots advocate for "economic freedom and limited government."

South Carolina News:

Associated Press: 2 companies expect to create 1,150 jobs in SC

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=gex0IH6v

A customer service provider and a Chinese textile company are coming to South Carolina with plans to create roughly 1,150 jobs over five years. STARTEK Inc. announced plans Monday to operate a new customer support center in Horry County. The global provider of outsourced call center services expects to invest \$10 million and generate up to 665 new jobs. The Colorado-based company plans to lease a 50,000

square foot facility in Carolina Forest. Keer Group says it will invest \$218 million in its first facility outside of China. The company plans to build a 230,000 square foot facility in the Indian Land area of Lancaster County and create 501 jobs.

Greenville News: Conservative leader: State GOP should focus on budget reform, schools

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2013312160082>

Rudolph Bell

The leader of a national conservative advocacy group said in Greenville Monday that he thinks South Carolina is "underperforming, compared to other red states" on such issues as budget and pension reform and providing more choice in education. Tim Phillips, president of Americans for Prosperity, was in town to help re-launch its state chapter, which he said plans to find, register and turn out 80,000 voters "who we know are with us on the issues." Phillips said his group's 35th state chapter would have an office in Greenville and maybe one along the coast.

The State: Lawmaker facing questions about using campaign cash

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/12/17/3163392/the-morning-buzz-lawmaker-facing.html#storylink=cpy>

Jamie Self

Members of the S.C. House Ethics Committee could decide Tuesday whether they believe state Rep. Harold Mitchell, D-Spartanburg, misused campaign money in violation of state ethics law. In a public hearing last month, the Ethics Committee reviewed dozens of transactions from Mitchell's account, including cash withdrawals, bank counter checks written to himself, money spent on purposes not clearly related to his campaign and improperly reported contributions and expenses. The committee took no action after the meeting, saying it would meet again to continue considering Mitchell's case.

Local News:

Post and Courier: Charleston County School District asks the feds for permission to delay new teacher evaluations

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20131216/PC16/131219525/1006/charleston-schools-want-to-slow-roll-out-of-new-teacher-evaluations>

Diette Courrage Casey

Charleston County School District wants to slow down the roll out of its controversial new evaluation system for teachers. The district has submitted a formal request to the U.S. Department of Education to delay implementing its BRIDGE evaluation, which would factor in students' test scores as a measure of teachers' efficacy, by at least one year. That means all of the district's teachers wouldn't be subject to BRIDGE until the 2016-17 school year, although some teachers would have students' growth included in their evaluations sooner.

Post and Courier: Pro-life group plans protest near MUSC

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20131216/PC16/131219546/1006/pro-life-group-plans-protest-near-musc>

Lauren Sausser

Conservative Christians will rally at noon Tuesday in Cannon Park to protest an agreement between the Medical University of South Carolina and a private West Ashley women's clinic. Bobby Eubanks, the pastor of Ridge Baptist Church in Summerville, organized the event with state Sen. Larry Grooms, R-Charleston, because he said they don't want state tax dollars used to pay for elective abortions. In a letter dated Oct. 2, interim MUSC President Mark Sothmann assured Grooms that is not happening.

The Item: Sumter home sales keep rising

http://www.theitem.com/news/local_news/sumter-home-sales-keep-rising/article_6f8f92a2-64bd-5657-bbed-76b9b5bca883.html

Braden Bunch

The Sumter housing market continued to show strong improvement in November, even as many other areas of South Carolina saw sales decline, the South Carolina Realtors reported Monday. Last month, the Sumter area market - which includes Clarendon County - saw home sales increase by nearly 14 percent when compared with the previous November, giving it the third-fastest growth rate out of the 16 market regions reported by the realty organization. In fact, according to the Realtors, 10 of the 16 markets experienced year-over-year declines in November, and statewide home sales were virtually flat - up only 0.6 percent - when compared to the same month last year.

Island Packet: Jasper County school board gives superintendent satisfactory evaluation

<http://www.islandpacket.com/2013/12/16/2852488/jasper-county-school-board-gives.html#storylink=cpy>

Sarah Bowman

The Jasper County school board gave superintendent Vashti Washington a satisfactory evaluation at its meeting Monday night, despite the school district's continued poor performance on state and federal standards and many calls for Washington's ouster. With the evaluation, Washington's \$165,000 contract has been extended one year, to now conclude in June 2017. The district also will increase its annual contribution to her annuity from 9 percent of her salary to 12 percent, according to her contract.

Rock Hill Herald: York County to pay \$3.2M more on Rock Hill street after budget error

<http://www.heraldonline.com/2013/12/16/5510016/york-county-council-agrees-to.html#storylink=cpy>

Jie Jenny Zou

The York County Council on Monday agreed to spend \$3.2 million more on a Rock Hill road project after a budgeting error was made and construction costs unexpectedly rose. The council voted 6-1 in favor of the additional funding for improvements to White Street, raising the project's total cost to \$9.1 million – a 55 percent increase over the \$5.9 million first budgeted in 2009. The ongoing project, which involves widening lanes along White Street from downtown Rock Hill to Constitution Boulevard, is paid for through Pennies for Progress, the county's road-building program that is financed by a 1-cent sales tax approved by voters.

National News:

Associated Press: Budget deal splits GOP leaders in House, Senate

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268798/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=n6EdNoqr

Charles Babington

Senate Republican leaders are criticizing a bipartisan budget deal, parting ways with their House counterparts who shepherded the measure through that chamber last week. The split makes it harder for the Republican Party to present a united front as it approaches the midterm election year. And it shows that even modest tweaks in tax and spending policies trigger strong reactions in conservative circles. Still, senators in both parties say the budget deal should have enough votes to pass and become law, perhaps by Wednesday.

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