

From: Moore, Camlin <CamlinMoore@gov.sc.gov>
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Subject: Morning Clips – Wednesday, December 21, 2016

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

McClatchy DC: Here's a twist: China brings textile jobs to USA

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/national/national-security/article122036194.html>

James Rosen

A Chinese fiber manufacturer is opening a plant in South Carolina, an investment that counters President-elect Donald Trump's campaign criticism of Beijing for allegedly stealing American jobs. South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, nominated by Trump to be the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, hailed the decision by Labon, a Shanghai-based company, to spend \$3.1 million refurbishing a factory in Orangeburg, South Carolina. "It's special any time a company decides to invest in one of our rural counties because it drastically improves the lives of those in the area," Haley said. Hongxin Chen, general manager of Labon, said his firm is excited to be launching its first operation in the United States. "Between the skilled workforce and friendly business climate, this decision was easy for us," he said. "This development will allow us not only to accommodate our continued business growth, but to better serve our customers as well." The move by Labon is a rare counter to the outflow of textile jobs from the South in recent decades. It also offers a counter-narrative to Trump's frequent lament that China is luring American firms with cheap labor and financial incentives.

General Assembly News:

The State: House members request to be dropped from SC Supreme Court petition

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article122032664.html>

Cassie Cope

Two S.C. Legislative Council members want no part of a state senator's request for the S.C. Supreme Court to clarify who will become the state's next lieutenant governor. S.C. House Speaker Jay Lucas, R-Darlington, and Rep. Greg Delleney, R-Chester, are requesting to be removed as respondents in a Supreme Court petition filed earlier this month by Sen. Tom Davis. The Beaufort County senator wants a ruling that the governor cannot appoint a lieutenant governor until after the 2018 election. Lucas and Delleney argue they play no role in the replacement of Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster, who will rise to become the next governor if Gov. Nikki Haley is confirmed ambassador to the United Nations. Meanwhile, Legislative Council member and S.C. Secretary of State Mark Hammond formally responded he will abide by the Supreme Court's decision.

Post and Courier: House lawyers say succession issue can be settled in Statehouse, not court

http://www.postandcourier.com/news/house-lawyers-say-succession-issue-can-be-settled-in-statehouse/article_cf38beb0-c6f7-11e6-8974-7754f80e2227.html

Gavin Jackson

Attorneys for two House leaders say a lawsuit dealing with how the state's next lieutenant governor is chosen can be settled by lawmakers, not the state Supreme Court. House Speaker Jay Lucas' chief of staff and lead lawyer Patrick Dennis said in a motion Tuesday that lawmakers can remedy differences over whether the state's constitution accurately reflects language about the transition. At issue is a measure voters approved in a 2012 statewide referendum. It stated that beginning in 2018 the governor appoints the lieutenant governor. Lawmakers, however, omitted the effective date in

2014 ratifying legislation. State Sen. Tom Davis, R-Beaufort, has asked the state Supreme Court to clarify the matter. Lucas, R-Hartsville, and House Judiciary Committee Chairman Greg Delleney, R-Chester, want to be dismissed from Davis' suit seeking court clarification.

WIS: In wake of school shooting, lawmakers press for gun, school resource officer changes

<http://www.wistv.com/story/34100084/in-wake-of-school-shooting-lawmakers-press-for-gun-school-resource-officer-changes>

Ashleigh Holland

It's a face you'll never forget and now family members are working to make sure you'll never forget his name. As we reported in September, 6-year-old Jacob Hall was killed after a gunman opened fire at an Upstate elementary school. Jacob's family has been working with state lawmakers on legislation that would ensure teachers can help keep children safe from a possible attack. A new bill would give educators permission to carry a gun to school. The family began speaking out on installing more resource officers in schools back in October. Now, some Upstate lawmakers say these bills are the answer and the compromise to those wishes. The Townville Elementary School shooting killed Jacob and injured another student and a teacher when the shooter opened fire on the playground. Jacob's aunt said the family hopes resource officers could be stationed at each school to react to a live shooter situation, but lawmakers say the price tag on that would be about \$84 million.

WACH: SC lawmaker wants mental health training for police

<http://wach.com/news/local/sc-lawmaker-wants-mental-health-training-for-police>

Melanie Barden

A state lawmaker is pushing a proposal that supporters say would improve the relationship between police and the public. Senator Vincent Sheheen pre-filed a bill last week that would allow the state's Law Enforcement Training Council to create a training center and crisis intervention teams in each county. By putting these safeguards in place, advocates say law enforcement will be better equipped to handle any situation. According to Bill Lindsey of the state's National Alliance on Mental Illness, knowing the difference between a criminal and someone who's mentally ill is vital. Lindsey says, "One in five people in the country has a mental illness. It's pervasive and people don't realize how all-encompassing it is." Richland County deputies went through the 40-hour training program two years ago. Cassy Radford with the sheriff's department says, "We cannot handle every situation the same because it's not the same and so having this training gives us another step to protect and serve the citizens of this county."

WSPA: Bill Would Legalize Gambling to Pay for SC Roads

<http://wspa.com/2016/12/20/bill-would-legalize-gambling-to-pay-for-sc-roads/>

Robert Kittle

One South Carolina lawmaker says there's a way to raise enough money to fix state roads without raising the gas tax: legalize gambling. Rep. Todd Rutherford, D-Columbia, has prefiled a bill in the House that would put a constitutional amendment question on the 2018 ballot asking voters whether they want to allow casinos and betting on horse racing and pro sports, with the money going to state road needs. "Every estimate I've seen ranks from the hundreds of millions of dollars to the billions of dollars," he says about how much legalized gambling would bring in for roads. He thinks casino operators would love to set up on the South Carolina coast. "We could do it off of the beach. It wouldn't have to be at Myrtle Beach proper, wouldn't increase traffic, wouldn't increase crime, and it'd be in counties that wanted it, that needed it, and it could benefit the entire state," he says. The state Democratic Party put an advisory referendum question on its primary ballot in 2014, asking Democratic voters whether they favored legalizing gambling as a way to pay for roads. In that vote, 81 percent said yes.

North Carolina News:

Associated Press: North Carolina lawmakers meeting to consider HB2 repeal

<http://bigstory.ap.org/52b1930481a9430d9de9dbcdae5f85cc>

North Carolina's legislature is reconvening to see if enough lawmakers are willing to repeal a 9-month-old law that limited LGBT rights, including which bathrooms transgender people can use in public schools and government buildings. House and Senate members planned to meet in the capital Wednesday for a special session two days after the Charlotte City Council gutted an ordinance that in March led the Republican-controlled General Assembly to pass House Bill 2, known by some as the "bathroom bill." For months, the state's Republican leaders had said they were willing to consider repealing the law if Charlotte acted first to undo its expanded antidiscrimination ordinance. But the mayor and most council members, with the support of gay rights groups, had been unwilling to do so in the name of equality. The Democrat-controlled council didn't act until Monday, two weeks after GOP Gov. Pat McCrory conceded the gubernatorial race to Democrat Roy Cooper.

SC Agency News:

The State: Man convicted in Hunnewell murder charged with inmate death

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/crime/article122051664.html>

Rachael Myers Lowe

Lorenzo Young, one of three men convicted of the 2013 murder of Columbia baker and mother of four, Kelly Hunnewell, was charged Tuesday in the stabbing death last month of a fellow inmate at the McCormick Correctional Institution. Young, now 22-years-old, is serving a life sentence for Hunnewell's shooting death. He and a co-defendant were found guilty of murder in December 2015. A third suspect, Troy Stevenson, is awaiting trial. According to the arrest warrant issued Dec. 13, 2016, Young and another inmate who also was charged, were seen leaving the cell of another inmate on or about Nov. 19, 2016, carrying "a homemade knife in his hand and his clothes covered in blood." On Nov. 19, 2016, the South Carolina Department of Corrections reported that inmate Reico Lamont Welch had been killed by another inmate the night before at McCormick. The 40-year-old Welch was serving time at the high security prison for burglary, grand larceny and criminal conspiracy, the corrections department said at the time of his death.

Post and Courier: S.C. inmates charged with murder in fatal stabbing at McCormick Correctional

http://www.postandcourier.com/news/s-c-inmates-charged-with-murder-in-fatal-stabbing-at/article_c673e318-c6fc-11e6-bd07-2fb38d8294ad.html

Gregory Yee

Two inmates at McCormick Correctional Institution have been charged with murder in the stabbing death of a fellow inmate. Arrest warrants for Courtney Lamont Pauling, 30, and Lorenzo Young, 22, were issued on Tuesday, according to affidavits provided by the S.C. Department of Corrections. Pauling and Young are accused in the Nov. 19 death of Reico Lamont Welch at the prison in the western part of the state, according to the Corrections Department. Both men were seen leaving Welch's cell with homemade knives in their hands and with their clothes covered in blood, according to the affidavits. The stabbing happened around 1 p.m., according to prison documents. Welch was transported from his cell and was later pronounced dead. Pauling is serving 50 years in prison for second-degree assault and battery, unauthorized use of a vehicle, kidnapping and armed robbery, according to prison records. Young is serving a life sentence for murder as well as a total of 35 years for second-degree burglary, attempted armed robbery and kidnapping.

SC Political News:

Post and Courier: Environmentalists balk at Obama's exclusion of S.C. coastlines from drilling ban

http://www.postandcourier.com/news/environmentalists-balk-at-obama-s-exclusion-of-s-c-coastlines/article_055787a0-c6f9-11e6-b374-476464517509.html

Emma Dumain

National environmental groups are heaping praise on President Barack Obama for banning oil and gas drilling in huge swaths of the Arctic and Atlantic oceans. Some South Carolina environmentalists,

however, are fuming. That's because Obama's executive order does not include protections for coastlines south of the Chesapeake Bay area. That leaves both Carolinas, Georgia and Florida still vulnerable to continued threats of offshore drilling and seismic testing, which many fear could disrupt their homes and livelihoods. "We are extremely disappointed," Frank Knapp, president and CEO of the South Carolina Small Business Chamber of Commerce and co-founder of the Business Alliance for Protecting the Atlantic Coast, told The Post and Courier. Last week, Knapp's organization, representing 35,000 businesses and 500,000 commercial fishing families, delivered a letter to the Obama administration asking for a ban on drilling and seismic testing.

Island Packet: Obama's permanent offshore drilling protection in Atlantic doesn't extend to SC

<http://www.islandpacket.com/news/local/community/beaufort-news/article122034704.html>

Stephen Fastenau

President Barack Obama permanently protected part of the Atlantic Ocean from offshore drilling on Tuesday, but the limited scope of the ban miffed longtime drilling opponents in South Carolina. Obama withdrew about 3.8 million acres of the Atlantic from the possibility of drilling — from offshore of New England to the Chesapeake Bay. The area includes 61 canyons that form an important ecosystem for fish and other marine life and are more susceptible to climate change than other areas of the world, a news release said. But some in South Carolina wondered why the protection didn't extend farther. "Beaufort is still in jeopardy," said S.C. Small Business Association president Frank Knapp, who created an organization of coastal businesses opposed to drilling. "We were anticipating most — if not all — of the Atlantic Coast to be banned from offshore drilling. That didn't happen." Beaufort Mayor Billy Keyserling has helped lead a unified opposition of communities on the East Coast.

Palmetto Business Daily: Senate approves bill that includes deepening Charleston Harbor

<http://palmettobusinessdaily.com/stories/511060236-senate-approves-bill-that-includes-deepening-charleston-harbor>

The U.S. Senate recently passed the Water Infrastructure Improvement for the Nation Act (WIIN), which includes Congressional authorization for the Charleston Harbor Deepening Project. WIIN approves a report detailing the construction phase of the Charleston Harbor Deepening Project. A 52-foot-deep harbor will accommodate new container ships without issues. The WIIN Act, formerly called the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), passed the Senate and House and awaits the president's signature. "The passage of WIIN marks one of the most significant milestones in the history of the Port of Charleston," South Carolina Ports Authority President and CEO Jim Newsome said. "With this important step by Congress, we now turn our attention to inclusion in the president's fiscal year 2018 budget, relative to the construction phase of the harbor deepening project. By the end of the decade, we will achieve 52 feet of depth and Charleston will be the deepest harbor on the East Coast."

NOTE: "South Carolina, the Southeastern region and our nation will enjoy the positive impacts of the Charleston Harbor Deepening Project for years to come," SCPA Board Chairman Pat McKinney said. "Today's Congressional authorization is the result of years of hard work and dedication by the South Carolina Congressional Delegation, Gov. [Nikki] Haley, our state, local and federal partners, and SCPA leadership. This world-class deepening project ensures SCPA will remain a competitive, growing port well into the future."

Savannah River Site/MOX News:

Aiken Standard: Nuclear waste repository goal of Energy Department plan, paving way out of Savannah River Site

http://www.aikenstandard.com/news/nuclear-waste-repository-goal-of-energy-department-plan-paving-way/article_54b5b6c6-c6e7-11e6-b63e-873a552e45d1.html

Thomas Gardiner

A draft plan to build a new defense waste repository for nuclear materials that could replace the

defunct Yucca Mountain facility in Nevada has been released by the U.S. Department of Energy, giving hope for a future nuclear pathway out of South Carolina. Barack Obama's administration in 2015 authorized the Energy Department to begin developing a new facility, and the draft lays out a path forward to find a permanent resting place for tons of U.S. radioactive waste. That includes thousands of cubic meters of waste currently sitting at Savannah River Site. Yucca Mountain is located in Nevada, adjacent to the Nevada National Security Site where nuclear weapons were tested during much of the Cold War. The project began construction in 2002. Funding was cut in 2011, shuttering the facility and leaving the U.S. without a solution for defense waste disposal. According to the document, "This draft plan is a snapshot of an evolving process. It projects the principal activities that need to occur, but cannot predict the timing or fashion in which they will occur."

Aiken Standard: AECOM and Energy Solution win big decommissioning contract

http://www.aikenstandard.com/news/aecom-and-energy-solution-win-big-decommissioning-contract/article_38f568ec-c6f5-11e6-aa3c-7bfb03c956a4.html

Thomas Gardiner

Two of the area's nuclear players have been awarded a major contract to clean up and decommission one of the nation's largest nuclear power facilities, the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station in California. Southern California Edison, the owning utility company, announced that AECOM and Energy Solutions were awarded the contract Tuesday. AECOM is the lead company of the partner organizations that make up Savannah River Remediation, the liquid waste contractor at South Carolina's Savannah River Site. Energy Solutions owns and operates the ChemNuclear low-level nuclear waste disposal facility near Barnwell. The overall value of the contract is approximately \$4.4 billion. In a press release from Energy Solutions, the company said, "The Decommissioning General Contract represents a significant portion of the work required to safely decommission the San Onofre nuclear plant. San Onofre is one of the largest commercial nuclear plant decommissioning projects to date in the United States."

Hurricane Matthew Recovery:

Island Packet: Sinkholes growing problem on Hilton Head following Hurricane Matthew

<http://www.islandpacket.com/news/politics-government/article122076049.html>

Teresa Moss

Sinkholes are a growing concern following Hurricane Matthew, Hilton Head Island Town Council was told during its regular meeting Tuesday. More than two dozen sinkholes have appeared across the island since the storm, said Charles Cousins, town director of community development. He said more are likely to occur with each new rain. "The volume of water that went through these culverts washed away fill sand," Cousins said. "We haven't had rain in a few months, but recent rain has washed more sand away causing sinkholes." The newest hole appeared last week on Oak Creek Lane in Port Royal Plantation, Cousins said. The road services about 60 homes, and a metal plate has been laid across the road to allow traffic to continue on the road, he said. The town will need to acquire permits from the state to fix each of the sinkholes, Cousins said.

Wildfires Across Southeast:

Herald-Journal: Greer couple brings trees, decorations to displaced Tenn. fire victims

<http://www.goupstate.com/news/20161220/greer-couple-brings-trees-decorations-to-displaced-tenn-fire-victims?rssfeed=true>

Zach Fox

Looking at her toppled Christmas tree, Lisa Garland had a moment of inspiration. Garland, who owns Stomping Grounds Coffee and Wine Bar in Greer with her husband, Grey, had seen the news stories about the dozens of families who lost their homes in the massive, fast-moving wildfires in Tennessee. She wanted to help, but it wasn't until her Christmas tree fell over that she figured out how she could

do it. "I happened to watch this one video about this one couple in Pigeon Forge, and they were the owners of a hotel. They were keeping 60 families at their hotel who had got burned out at the fires," she said. "No sooner did I watch that video, and I went and sat down in my living room, and my Christmas tree fell down to the ground. After I cleaned it up, I sat and thought, 'What is wrong with me. I'm getting upset about a tree and there are these people that don't have a house or even a space to put a tree.' It was a sign I needed to do something bigger than the tree." So, the Garlands decided to bring some Christmas cheer to those families. They began raising money to donate a Christmas tree, complete with lights and ornaments, to each of the families living at the Arbors at Island Landing hotel in Gatlinburg.

Townville Shooting:

Independent Mail: Townville firefighters, Crowder honored in Anderson County

<http://www.independentmail.com/story/news/local/2016/12/20/townville-firefighters-crowder-honored-anderson-county/95657636/>

Nikie Mayo

In an emotional ceremony Tuesday night, firefighters from Townville were honored for their efforts to respond to a Sept. 28 shooting at an elementary school. Outgoing Anderson County Councilman Francis Crowder, who decided not to seek another term, was also honored by legislators and colleagues for serving six years in public office. The Anderson County Council unanimously approved a resolution honoring the Townville firefighters, who volunteer daily to cover one of the most rural communities in the Upstate. Councilman Tom Allen, who read the resolution, said he had already presented it to the firefighters at their recent Christmas dinner. "I thought it would mean more to them there," he said Tuesday at the council meeting. The firefighters did not attend the council meeting Tuesday and wanted to remain out of the spotlight, county officials said.

Opinion/Editorial:

The Herald: Too few women serve in Legislature

<http://www.heraldonline.com/opinion/editorials/article121964064.html>

Editorial Board

South Carolina now has a record number of women in its state Senate. In fact, the number doubled during the recent elections. But despite those dramatic-sounding gains, the number of women in the state Senate still totals only four. Women hold just 14.7 percent of the 170 seats in the Legislature, far below the national average of 24.4 percent. The state ranks 22nd in the nation for gender parity in elected offices. At least that is some improvement from its 46th-place ranking in 1993. Until this year's election, only one woman, Lexington Republican Katrina Shealy, elected in 2012, had occupied a seat in the Senate. The number grew to two last fall when Margie Bright Matthews, D-Colleton, won a special election to replace Sen. Clementa Pinckney, who was killed in the massacre at Charleston's Emanuel AME Church in June 2015. Two more women were elected to the Senate last month: former state Rep. Mia McLeod, D-Richland, and Charleston attorney Sandy Senn, a Republican.

NOTE: Despite the election of Nikki Haley, the state's first woman governor, the advance of women in state politics has been painfully slow. Before Shealy, only 10 women had ever been elected to the 46-member state Senate. And before Shealy, Linda Short, a Chester Democrat, was the only woman in the state Senate until she retired in 2008.

Lancaster News: Column: 2014 reform failed to shift control from lawmakers

http://m.thelancasternews.com/lancasternews/db_322933/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=3joSUuiT

In early 2014, Gov. Nikki Haley signed into law a bill that was supposed to reform state government. It created the Department of Administration and moved the Budget and Control Board's functions under the governor's control. The bill was widely hailed as historic, and the governor signed it with much fanfare. Yet nearly three years later, somehow it has been almost completely forgotten. Why? Perhaps because the bill changed so little. It was supposed to transfer the many executive functions

long performed by the legislature back to the executive branch, thus restoring the separation of powers in South Carolina state government. That has long been the aim of supporters of government restructuring in South Carolina. Yet, with the Restructuring Act of 2014 now law, the legislature still runs the show with few checks and little accountability.

NOTE: But this was never the historic change touted by Gov. Haley and lawmakers. The bill was supposed to separate powers, not merely the workaday administration of agencies. It was supposed to end – or at least change – the legislature’s longstanding dominance of state government. It was supposed to put accountability for executive government functions squarely under the governor. It didn’t.

South Carolina News:

Greenville News: State's uninsured population drops

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/health/2016/12/21/states-uninsured-population-drops/95619664/>

Liv Osby

Mirroring a national trend, the number of uninsured South Carolina adults declined by 7 percent from 2013 to 2015, a new report shows. While the number of uninsured nationally dropped from 20 percent to 13 percent — even in states like South Carolina that didn’t expand Medicaid, the number in the Palmetto State dropped from 23 percent to 16 percent, according to the report from the Commonwealth Fund, a private foundation that advocates for a better health care system. The decline was attributed to the Affordable Care Act. “The Affordable Care Act’s health insurance coverage expansions are working to get people covered and help them afford health care,” said Sara Collins, vice president for coverage and access at the fund. “We know that health insurance is essential for people to get the care they need,” she added. “In this time of uncertainty about the ACA, it’s important to keep in mind the financial and health protection health insurance provides for families.”

Local News:

WIS: Lott, Holbrook look to combat the new 'drug of choice' in the Midlands

<http://www.wistv.com/story/34100269/lott-holbrook-look-to-combat-the-new-drug-of-choice-in-the-midlands>

Chad Mills

Top lawmen in the Midlands are working on a plan to fight heroin. Sheriff Leon Lott says it's becoming a problem in Richland and Lexington counties. On Monday, Lott met with Columbia Police Chief Skip Holbrook, local doctors, and other chiefs and sheriffs from the Midlands to talk about combating heroin, which he says seems to be the "drug of choice" right now. Lott says he and the others feel they have to be proactive given what's happening in Myrtle Beach. "Myrtle Beach and Horry County is the worst spot in South Carolina at the present time," Lott said. "They've had 170 overdoses where 70 people have died so far this year. Just last week, they had nine overdoses, and I don't want us to become like Myrtle Beach and Horry County." Lott says the plan in the Midlands won't just be about enforcement -- it'll be about education and treatment too. Holbrook says the collaborative effort should give law enforcement a better understanding of what the problem is here.

Associated Press: Police charge former boyfriend in woman's 2005 disappearance

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=1RtJurEV

SC State Wire

A man who was the boyfriend of missing North Charleston woman Brandy Hanna has been arrested in connection to Hanna's disappearance. North Charleston police officials tell local media that Garland Eugene Lankford was arrested Tuesday and charged with obstruction of justice. Hanna went missing in May 2005 after getting off from work at a North Charleston restaurant. She was officially declared deceased in August 2013. According to an affidavit, Lankford provided false and misleading

statements regarding Hanna. It says Lankford told investigators he planned to meet Hanna on the night she disappeared, but he ended up working late. However, investigators say time sheets from Lankford's employer show he got off work at 4 p.m. Investigators say Lankford also gave misleading information regarding phone calls he made after Hanna's disappearance. It's unclear if Lankford has an attorney.

Associated Press: Columbia man charged with murder after shooting victim dies

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

SC State Wire

Police in Columbia have now charged a man with murder after a man shot at an apartment complex has died. Police arrested 29-year-old Jirmaine Mobley last week in the Dec 10 shooting of 26-year-old Justin Jones. Mobley had been charged with aggravated assault and battery and illegally carrying a pistol. Jones died in a hospital Sunday afternoon and Mobley is now charged with murder. Police have not released a motive in the shooting. It was not known if Mobley has an attorney on the upgraded charge.

Associated Press: Man convicted of killing Columbia baker faces new charge

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=Nn2S0RIr

SC State Wire

A man sentenced to life in prison for killing an employee at a Columbia bakery in 2013 has now been charged with killing an inmate at a state prison in McCormick. Local media report that 22-year-old Lorenzo Young was charged with murder Tuesday in the stabbing death of an inmate at the McCormick Correctional Institution last month. Young and 33-year-old Courtney Pauling are charged with killing 40-year-old Reico Lamont Welch at the prison Nov. 19. Young was convicted last year in the death of Kelly Hunnewell at a Columbia bakery. An arrest warrant states that Young and Pauling were seen leaving Welch's cell with a homemade knife and blood on his clothes. Welch had been serving time for burglary, grand larceny and conspiracy.

Sun News: Court orders Horry County to stop construction on International Drive

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/news/local/article122059634.html>

Audrey Hudson

The S.C. Court of Appeals on Tuesday ordered Horry County officials to stop all construction of International Drive pending the outcome of litigation by environmentalists seeking to block the contentious project. The Coastal Conservation League and S.C. Wildlife Federation have lost state and federal court fights to block construction, but appealed both and the state granted that request last week. However, the county continued construction work on the road, prompting the environmentalists to ask the Appeals Court to clarify its order which will stand until the appeal is resolved. "Because this court stayed the issuance of the certification that 'authorizes Horry County to build a highway within and adjacent to Lewis Ocean Bay Heritage Preserve in Horry County,' the order requires Horry County halt all work on the road project, including the widening, paving and realigning of the existing unimproved portion of International Drive pending the resolution of this appeal or other proceedings of this court," the judges wrote in the order.

The State: USC to ask local taxpayers for \$15 million for new medical school

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/article122049444.html>

Avery G. Wilks

The University of South Carolina expects local governments to chip in \$15 million for the university's new medical school building on the Bull Street property in downtown Columbia. But Columbia and Richland County leaders are not eager to pitch in. Nor have they been asked for the money, weeks after USC filed a document with the state saying local governments would be on board. "It has not even been mentioned in any of the meetings or casual conversations of the council," Columbia City Councilman Howard Duvall said. USC wants the money, plus \$50 million from the state, to kick-start a new \$200 million health sciences research complex on 16 acres of Bull Street land donated by

Greenville developer Bob Hughes, it told the state in a budget request last month. The \$65 million in state and local dollars would go toward an \$80 million, 130,000-square-foot medical school building slated to open in 2020, the budget request said. Private donations would make up the other \$15 million.

Greenville News: Upstate gets federal aid for the homeless

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/2016/12/21/upstate-gets-federal-aid-homeless/95665816/>

Angelia Davis

Nineteen Upstate agencies will receive federal grants to support individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The agencies are among 61 homeless housing and service programs across the state chosen to receive a portion of \$9,734,026 in Continuum of Care grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Upstate is getting a total of \$3,240,222 of the state's more than \$9 million in Continuum of Care grants. The grants are intended to provide critically needed housing and support services to those experiencing homelessness, HUD said. "We know how to end homelessness and will continue to encourage our local partners to use the latest evidence to achieve success," said HUD Secretary Julián Castro. "These grants support proven strategies to end homelessness once and for all."

Post and Courier: Local businesses fund free bus trips from East Side to Food Lion for 6 months

http://www.postandcourier.com/charleston_sc/local-businesses-fund-free-bus-trips-from-east-side-to/article_a7bf43b2-c6df-11e6-88bd-7f4c9a137d01.html

Abigail Darlington

Several local businesses, including Belmond Charleston Place and Blackbaud, are picking up bus fares to the King Street Food Lion for at least the next six months. The combined \$46,000 in donations will allow the Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority to extend free service on Route 20, which connects the East Side to the nearest grocery store about a mile away. CARTA started offering free rides on the bus line starting in late September, days after the Bi-Lo on Meeting Street unexpectedly closed. The subsidy, which helps residents who relied on the Bi-Lo, was originally set to last a month, but the CARTA board voted to extend it until Jan. 18. The new donations from local businesses will keep the route free until the end of July, if not longer. Those funding the effort include: The East Bay Company, business lawyer Neil Robinson, philanthropists Hilton and Catherine Smith, as well as the owners of the former Bi-Lo site.

The State: Some of the best home Christmas light displays in the Midlands 2016

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article122052159.html>

The first year Paul Towns put on his Christmas light display, the transformer on a telephone pole powering his property could not handle it. "The lights were on for two hours, and the thing just exploded," Towns said. "It was like a bomb went off." Every December, Towns adorns his Elgin property with more than 40,000 Christmas lights, hundreds of toy trains and other decorations. It takes two transformers to power what has become known to Towns and his family as the Elgin Christmas Light Show at 2433 Charlie Horse Circle. There is no admission fee, but every year donations pour in from visitors whose cars line up for a mile down the road to see his display. Towns never has solicited donations, but visitors have insisted, he said. They have left cash on his porch, or stuffed money into his shirt pocket, saying "to help pay your electric bill." He has been donating the proceeds to Camp Kemo since 2004 and last year helped send 36 children to Camp Kemo in Sawyer's name.

President-elect Trump News:

Associated Press: After violence abroad, Trump meeting with security adviser

<http://bigstory.ap.org/d20f2c8afdf645e48e49c20c41267d17>

President-elect Donald Trump is planning to meet with his incoming national security adviser in the aftermath of a rattling day of violence around the world. Trump appeared to jump ahead of investigators in blaming Islamic terrorists for deadly incidents Monday in Turkey and Germany and

vowing anew to eradicate their regional and global networks. He called the brazen shooting of Russia's ambassador to Turkey "a violation of all rules of civilized order." He added that a "radical Islamic terrorist" had assassinated the diplomat, Andrei Karlov. Turkish authorities identified the gunman as Mevlut Mert Altintas, a member of Ankara's riot police squad, and said he was later killed in a shootout with police. Altintas shouted in Turkish about the Syrian city of Aleppo and also yelled "Allahu akbar," Arabic for "God is great."

Associated Press: The oilman who brought Trump and the Bush world together

<http://bigstory.ap.org/86d6631e5dcc4aaeb74ea95f4c992204>

Throughout the presidential campaign, the Bush family and many of its Republican allies turned their backs on Donald Trump. Now, they're finding common cause with Trump over his pick to lead the State Department: Exxon Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson, who has long orbited their same political, philanthropic and business worlds. Former President George W. Bush, who has largely avoided politics since leaving office in 2009, heaped praise on Tillerson in a recent phone call to Sen. Bob Corker, the Tennessee lawmaker who will oversee the secretary of state confirmation hearings. Jeb Bush, Tillerson's preferred candidate in the 2016 race, called the Exxon executive a "good man and accomplished leader." Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice and Robert Gates — Bush's vice president, secretary of state and secretary of defense — have all offered glowing endorsements. Gates, who runs a consulting firm with Rice that represents Exxon, first put Tillerson on Trump's radar when the president-elect was dissatisfied with his more conventional options.

United Nations News:

Associated Press: Delays hamper last evacuations from rebel enclave in Aleppo

<http://bigstory.ap.org/4b2af1bbba48464782daf81eae4b469e>

Delays hampered the last evacuations of Syrian rebels and civilians from what is left of the opposition's enclave in Aleppo as its residents waited on Wednesday for the arrival of 20 U.N. observers meant to monitor the final exodus from the city. Some 3,000 rebel fighters and civilians stood outside in harsh wintry conditions overnight, waiting in vain for to board what may be the last convoy out of the enclave. Activists circulated photos on social media of families huddled around fires amid the sleet and snow. By midday, temperatures in the city hovered around freezing. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the conflict through a network of activists on the ground, said 60 buses were waiting to leave eastern Aleppo on Wednesday with the last of the evacuees — the final step that surrenders the Syrian opposition foothold in the war-torn city to the government. Rebels and the government traded blame for the delay.

World News:

Associated Press: Investigators seek Tunisian in Berlin market truck attack

<http://bigstory.ap.org/61b09b1b98954ae4a50357421a3d3edf>

Investigators hunted Wednesday for a Tunisian man whose documents were found in the truck that plowed into a Christmas market in Berlin, killing 12 people and injuring 48 others, German media reported. The Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for Monday's attack on the market next to the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church in the center of the capital. Soon after, police arrested a Pakistani man found about a kilometer (0.6 miles) from the market who matched witness descriptions of the truck's driver, but they released him the next day, saying they did not have evidence tying him to the attack. Several German media outlets reported Wednesday, without identifying their sources, that authorities were searching for a Tunisian man whose identification documents were found in the cab of the truck. He was named as either Ahmed or Anis A., though he reportedly used various aliases.

Associated Press: Moscow doubts killer of ambassador was a lone wolf

<http://bigstory.ap.org/c4c8df4dbf47482badacd27bd7ee6eb6>

The spokesman for President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday indicated that Moscow doesn't believe the gunman who killed Russia's ambassador to Turkey acted on his own, but refused to explain the reasons for the suspicion. "We shouldn't rush with any theories before the investigators establish who were behind the assassination of our ambassador," said spokesman Dmitry Peskov, who offered no suggestions about who those people might be. The ambassador, Andrei Karlov, was killed Monday evening in front of stunned onlookers at a photo exhibition in Ankara. The assassin, Mevlut Mert Altintas of Ankara's riot police squad, was killed in a police operation. On Tuesday, Russia flew a team of 18 investigators and foreign ministry officials to Turkey to take part in the probe. Their plane returned with Karlov's body and his family. Russian officials and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu who was visiting Moscow met the family at the Vnukovo airport late on Tuesday. Ankara has not made public any theories. But a senior Turkish government official, who spoke Tuesday on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to release details to the press, said it was unlikely Altintas acted alone.

Associated Press: Deadly Mexico fireworks blast hit market packed for holidays

<http://bigstory.ap.org/15032a46ea004134816b61831acae5dd>

The San Pablito fireworks market was especially well stocked for the holidays and bustling with hundreds of shoppers when a powerful chain-reaction explosion ripped through its stalls, killing at least 29 people and leaving dozens more badly burned. The third such blast to ravage the market on the northern outskirts of Mexico's capital since 2005 sent up a towering plume of smoke that was lit up by a staccato of bangs and flashes of light. Once the smoke cleared, the open-air bazaar was reduced to a stark expanse of ash, rubble and the charred metal of fireworks stands, casting a pall over the country's Christmas season. Mexico State health officials said 72 people were being treated for injuries from Tuesday's explosion, including for severe burns, in some cases over 90 percent of their bodies. Ten children were among the hospitalized. Authorities have not yet said what may have caused the explosions which took place in Mexico State, which rings the capital.

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Camlin Moore

Cell: 803-206-8236

Office: 803-734-8044