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Subject: Morning Clips – Thursday, December 1, 2016

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

The State: No apologies from 3 Rec Commission board members whom Gov. Haley is trying to fire
<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/crime/article117985243.html>

John Monk

The three Richland County Recreation Commission members who chose not to resign but to fight S. C. Gov. Nikki Haley's decision to fire them had no apologies when they showed up Wednesday at a hearing called by the governor to give them a chance to say why they shouldn't be fired for gross mismanagement and neglect of duty. During an almost three-hour hearing at the House of Representatives Blatt Building, the three board members – chair J. Marie Green, vice-chair Barbara Mickens and Thomas Clark – offered spirited defenses, no apologies and said news media reports about events at the Recreation Commission were inflammatory and had made matters worse. In recent days, four board members – Weston Furgess Jr., Wilbert Lewis, George Martin and Joseph Weeks – chose to resign rather than to contest Haley's decision to remove them from office. The hearing was conducted by three Haley-appointed Columbia lawyers with experience in labor and business law: Tommy Lydon, Derrick Williams and Ashley Cuttino.

WIS: Board member: Claims against her, others are part of 'conspiracy' to destroy Rec Commission
<http://www.wistv.com/story/33829919/board-member-claims-against-her-others-are-part-of-conspiracy-to-destroy-rec-commission>

Jeremy Turnage

Three of the remaining members of the Richland County Recreation Commission made their case to keep their jobs during a special panel hearing on Wednesday morning. For three hours, all three offered some degree of defiance as they appeared before a panel of three attorneys who tried to drill down into the way the commission board has handled claims of mismanagement, harassment, intimidation, nepotism and incompetence. Several of those issues were tied to the tenure of former Executive Director James Brown, III who retired under pressure a few months ago. Testifying the longest and probably the most defiant was Green. "Today's actions are the result of a conspiracy to destroy the Richland County Recreation Commission, Mr. James Brown, Mrs. Barbara Mickens and myself, J. Marie Green and to cover up the wrongdoing of those named above," Green said. Green also said she modeled her behavior as a public official after that of Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall.

WACH: Commissioner: Actions against Rec Commission are a "conspiracy"
<http://wach.com/news/local/commissioner-actions-against-rec-commission-are-a-conspiracy>

Tara Petitt

The three remaining commissioners from the Richland County Recreation Commission's board stood before a panel of legal experts Wednesday to publicly defend themselves in a public hearing at the State House. Chairwoman Marie Green, vice-chair Chair Barbara Mickens and Thomas Clark are three of the seven board members accused of several things, including neglecting to investigate claims of nepotism, intimidation and sexual harassment at the agency. Wednesday's hearing was ordered earlier this month by Governor Nikki Haley after lawmakers urged her to remove the board members who supported former agency chief, James Brown. Brown is the target of several lawsuits

that allege sexual harassment, bribery and intimidation. In October, Brown was indicted on a misconduct in office charge. The charge accuses Brown of forcing sexual contact on female employees at the Recreation Commission. He retired three days after the indictment and is also charged with intimidating a witness tied to the case. On Wednesday, the remaining commissioners that have yet to step down explained to legal experts why they shouldn't be removed.

WLTX: Rec Commission Members Face Governor's Panel

<http://www.wltx.com/news/local/rec-commission-members-face-governors-panel/359650607>

Sonia Gutierrez

Three Richland County Recreation Commission members are defending their board position from Governor Nikki Haley's decision to remove them. Haley's accusing them of three things surrounding mismanagement, ignoring nepotism and employee complaints about sexual harassment and intimidation. Chairwoman Marie Green and board member Barbara Mickens were both defensive and non-apologetic during the almost three hour long hearing. Thomas Clark maintained that he started this year and has nothing to do with the allegations. He said some of the RCRC staff asked him to stay and be their voice but Clark says he'll respect the Governor's decision. Of the seven member board, four of them have resigned after the investigation started. Joseph Weeks being the last one to do on Wednesday by not showing up to defend his position on the board. The panel is now going to make a recommendation to the Governor and she will decide to keep them on the board or take them off.

WOLO: Richland Co. Recreation Commission Testify Before Governor's Office

<http://www.abccolumbia.com/2016/11/30/richland-co-recreation-commission-testify-before-governors-office/>

Gabrielle Franklin

Governor Nikki Haley recommends that all seven of the Richland County Recreation Board members be removed from the committee. Four members have already resigned but the remaining three took the opportunity to speak on their involvement in the commission and the controversy surrounding the group. "Today's actions are the result of a conspiracy to destroy the Richland County Recreation Commission." A bold statement from commission Chair J. Marie Green opened the testimony hearing of board members Wednesday. Jay Babb is an attorney representing several suits involving claims of sexual harassment and wrongful termination against the commission. He says was stunned to hear the conspiracy accusation. "I was shocked at hearing that and shocked by those kinds of assertions that are being made. If that's her position, so be it. If it's to the extent that she's applying it to my clients, absolutely false."

Nikki Haley: UN Ambassador News:

Washington Post: Trump's takeover of the GOP is now complete

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trumps-takeover-of-the-gop-is-now-complete/2016/11/30/bf5f8dc2-b714-11e6-a677-b608fbb3aaf6_story.html?utm_term=.6750712feaf3

Phillip Rucker

For Republicans fearful of a Donald Trump presidency, Mitt Romney was their voice and conscience. The GOP's 2012 presidential nominee became the unyielding face of the resistance to the party's 2016 nominee. Then Trump won. One by one, Republicans who stood up to Trump or questioned his statements and antics have made a pilgrimage to Trump Tower to kiss the president-elect's ring, or joined his administration, or decided uncharacteristically to just keep their mouths shut. And at long last Tuesday night, the figurehead of the "Never Trump" movement also capitulated. After an intimate dinner with Trump of frog legs and diver scallops at a fine Manhattan restaurant (in a Trump-owned building, naturally), Romney publicly acquiesced.

NOTE: As Trump has met with dozens of potential appointees and other political and business leaders in recent weeks, his advisers have stressed their ideological diversity and the fact that many did not support him or offered their support only nominally. Consider, for instance, South Carolina

Gov. Nikki Haley. She spoke out against Trump during the primaries. After he won the Republican nomination, she eventually supported him, but she did little to help him in the general election. Yet after the election, she hit it off with Trump, and he was impressed enough with her to nominate her to serve as his ambassador to the United Nations.

New York Magazine: Every One of Donald Trump's Cabinet Picks So Far Opposes LGBT Rights
<http://nymag.com/thecut/2016/11/so-far-every-member-of-trumps-cabinet-opposes-lgbt-rights.html>

Claire Landsbaum

During his acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention, Donald Trump did something unusual: He acknowledged LGBT Americans. Referring to the mass shooting at Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida, Trump said, "This time, the terrorist targeted the LGBTQ community ... and we're going to stop it." He then promised to "protect LGBTQ citizens from the violence and oppression of a hateful foreign ideology." Coming from a Republican politician, even an acknowledgment of the LGBT community is pretty novel. But Trump's promise was to protect LGBT Americans from hateful ideology abroad — he didn't mention the hatred many regularly experience at home, sometimes due to policies proposed by people with whom he surrounds himself. Because of all his cabinet and cabinet-level picks so far, not one has a history of standing up for LGBT rights.

NOTE: South Carolina governor Nikki Haley will serve as the ambassador to the United Nations, and although she drew fire from conservative pundits for referencing "modern families" in her response to Obama's final State of the Union, she's not exactly progressive when it comes to LGBT issues. In 2010 she said marriage is between "one man and one woman," and three years later she backed her state's ban on same-sex marriage. "The citizens of South Carolina spoke ... they spoke something that I, too, believe, which is marriage should be between a man and a woman," she said at the time. "I'm going to stand by the people of this state, stand by the Constitution, I'm going to support it and fight for it every step of the way."

Hindustan Times: Trump asks Indian-American Preet Bharara to continue as New York attorney
<http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/trump-asks-indian-american-preet-bharara-to-continue-as-new-york-attorney/story-WiDY8i35yepg0u6Kk89cxH.html>

Yashwant Raj

President-elect Donald Trump has asked Preet Bharara, the US attorney for the Southern District of New York, to continue, making him the third Indian-American to get the nod for the incoming administration. Bharara, who was appointed by President Barack Obama and had acquired a reputation for being tough on insider trading and other securities scams, met Trump on Wednesday morning triggering speculation of an administration position. "The president-elect asked, presumably because he's a New Yorker and is aware of the great work that our office has done over the past seven years, asked to meet with me to discuss whether or not I'd be prepared to stay on as the United States attorney to do the work as we have done it, independently, without fear or favour for the last seven years," Bharara told reporters.

NOTE: He is the third Indian-American to get a nod from Trump to join his administration after South Carolina governor Nikki Haley, who has been tapped for US ambassador to UN, and Seema Verma for medicaid and medicare services.

General Assembly News:

The State: Crack down on oil pipelines, legislative committee told
<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article118104148.html>

Sammy Fretwell

One of the worst pipeline spills in state history wasn't discovered through a sophisticated leak detection system. It was found by an ordinary citizen who noticed dead vegetation and the powerful smell of gasoline in a rural Upstate community two years ago. That's what a state study committee was told Wednesday — and the failure by the Kinder Morgan company to quickly find the leak is an example of why critics say South Carolina should crack down on oil pipeline companies. "This was a

major failure of the system, and who discovered it? Somebody in Belton walking down the street,” Greenville lawyer Frank Holleman said during a nearly eight-hour hearing in Columbia. Holleman, with the Southern Environmental Law Center, was among a chorus of speakers who said controls on petroleum pipeline companies are too lax in South Carolina. The study committee that held Wednesday’s session is examining whether to recommend tightening state law, a response to Kinder Morgan’s plan last year for a \$1 billion oil pipe through South Carolina and Georgia.

SC Agency News:

Associated Press: Report: Food stamp overpayments after floods may top \$10M

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

SC State Wire

South Carolina's inspector general says food stamp overpayments following last year's historic flooding may total more than \$10 million. The Greenville News reports (<http://grnol.co/2fllMcp>) that Inspector General Patrick Maley attributes roughly \$3 million to fraud and the rest to errors. But his report says the state Department of Social Services is not at fault because federal guidelines don't require applicants to prove they qualify for the disaster aid. Lawmakers were suspicious because the number of people applying for food benefits in some areas far exceeded those applying for other aid following the October 2015 floods. According to Maley's report, 304,365 South Carolina households received \$97 million in flood-related food benefits. That includes \$21 million to nearly 125,000 existing recipients who automatically received temporary supplements because they live in disaster-declared counties.

SC Delegation News:

McClatchy DC: Clyburn retains power among Democrats – despite whispers, without challenge

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/politics-government/congress/article118037073.html>

Matthew Schofield

There was a moment this week when what appeared to be a challenge to the leadership standing of South Carolina’s Rep. Jim Clyburn could have turned nasty. It didn’t because, according to Missouri Congressman Emanuel Cleaver, Clyburn is “ridiculously loyal.” And that, he added, avoided “an explosion” within the already stumbling Democratic Party. Clyburn, as the assistant to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., is the third-highest-ranking Democrat in the House of Representatives. On the heels of the party’s failure to take control of the House, Senate or president’s office in the November elections, there were calls for change within the party’s House leadership. The leadership, some younger members were saying, was too old. Pelosi, 76, appeared to be bolstering her authority by offering the also-76-year-old Clyburn’s spot to a younger member. It was a notion that died quickly, and Wednesday afternoon Clyburn was returned to his position without challenge. Pelosi was re-elected to her role, as well, though there was a strong challenge from Rep. Tim Ryan of Ohio. Clyburn said he was humbled by the support.

Post and Courier: On Capitol Hill, Clyburn's colleagues have his back

http://www.postandcourier.com/news/on-capitol-hill-clyburn-s-colleagues-have-his-back/article_8959fd4c-b73d-11e6-ae22-eb8b21c515bb.html

Emma Dumain

U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn was unanimously picked by his peers Wednesday to keep his post as assistant Democratic leader in the next Congress. The result wasn't surprising. The South Carolina lawmaker was running unopposed for reelection to the third most senior slot in House Democratic leadership, a spot he's held since 2011. Still, the circumstances surrounding the vote sent a very clear message about Clyburn's continued standing on Capitol Hill, specifically within the 43-member Congressional Black Caucus where his allies are prepared to protect him and his status as the highest ranking black lawmaker in Congress at all costs. At the same time, the episode further showcased the enduring power and influence of the black caucus where Clyburn, entering his 24th

year in office this January, remains its figurehead.

Keith Lamont Scott Case:

Charlotte Observer: Protesters march through Charlotte, demanding answers on Scott, Carr shootings

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/special-reports/charlotte-shooting-protests/article117914953.html>

Dozens of protesters marched from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police headquarters to the city center Wednesday night after a prosecutor's announcement that Officer Brentley Vinson would not be charged in Keith Lamont Scott's death. Speakers at the protest, organized by the coalition Charlotte Uprising, said they want to see more police transparency in investigations. The march was generally peaceful, especially compared with the sometimes violent protests in the days after Scott's death in September. A heavy rain that soaked protesters around 7 p.m. Wednesday may have kept some people from participating. However, scuffles between police and protesters broke out around 8:30 p.m. at the EpiCentre as the march continued through uptown to the Transit Center. The procession returned to CMPD headquarters a few minutes before 9. CMPD said its officers had arrested a total of four people in protests it described as mostly peaceful. The four arrests were for obstructing traffic, with one person also charged with disorderly conduct.

Michael Slagger Case:

Associated Press: Jurors in Slager trial deliberate after monthlong trial

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=m5xi8qyF

Bruce Smith

Jurors in the Michael Slager murder trial will resume deliberating the fate of the white former North Charleston police officer whose fatal shooting of a black motorist was captured on cellphone video. Slager is charged in the death of 50-year-old Walter Scott, who was shot five times in the back as he ran from a traffic stop in April of last year. Although Slager was charged with murder, Circuit Judge Clifton Newman told the jury with 11 white members and one black member Wednesday that they could consider a lesser charge of voluntary manslaughter. Jurors return to the Charleston County Courthouse on Thursday after they considered the case for about an hour Wednesday. The jury has heard testimony from 55 witnesses during a monthlong trial.

Associated Press: The Latest: Michael Slager murder trial goes to the jury

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=SPXyY8Fa

SC State Wire

The case of a former South Carolina police officer charged with murder in the shooting death of an unarmed black motorist is now before the jury. Circuit Judge Clifton Newman gave the jury instructions on the law and now the panel of one black man and 11 white people will consider the case after a monthlong trial. Michael Slager, who is white, is charged with murder after shooting 50-year-old Walter Scott during a traffic stop last year in North Charleston. The shooting was captured on dramatic cellphone video that stunned the nation. The judge instructed the jury that they can acquit Slager, convict him of murder or convict him of voluntary manslaughter. A murder conviction carries a sentence of 30 years to life. Conviction on a count of voluntary manslaughter carries a sentence of two years to 30 years.

Post and Courier: For a second day, jurors deliberate Michael Slager case

http://www.postandcourier.com/news/for-a-second-day-jurors-deliberate-michael-slager-case/article_8b27c934-b77d-11e6-b3a5-470b037f6076.html

Andrew Knapp

A jury will resume deliberations Thursday morning over two criminal charges against former North Charleston policeman Michael Slager. The 12 jurors discussed the case Wednesday for an hour

before opting to sleep on it for a night. Slager, 35, faces conviction on one of two counts in Walter Scott's shooting death: murder or voluntary manslaughter. With the case in the jurors' hands, only journalists have swarmed the courthouse grounds in downtown Charleston. The area was devoid of any demonstrators. Since a video of it surfaced last year, the shooting has raised ire among local community advocates who called the killing the latest in a long line of unfair practices by officers from the North Charleston Police Department.

Post and Courier: After month of trial in Walter Scott shooting, heavy burden now lies in jurors' hands

http://www.postandcourier.com/news/after-month-of-trial-in-walter-scott-shooting-heavy-burden/article_90316bd0-b6b8-11e6-bf45-8f86c5788b5e.html

Andrew Knapp

Twelve jurors stepped out of the courtroom Wednesday night, and for the first time since they entered the murder trial a month ago, they started talking about whether a North Charleston police officer committed a crime when he shot Walter Scott. But after an hour of deliberating Michael Slager's fate, they resolved to start anew the next day. It's a possible indication of the tall task that lies ahead of them: reaching a verdict in a police-involved killing. They will have options for convicting Slager: murder, which carries between 30 years and life in prison, and voluntary manslaughter, punishable with between two and 30 years. And as the jurors mulled those verdicts and considered Slager's argument of self-defense, Scott's two brothers and their attorney stepped outside the courthouse in downtown Charleston and into the light of television cameras.

Wildfires Across Southeast:

Associated Press: Recovery begins as rains help put out Tennessee wildfires

<http://bigstory.ap.org/a645b4712aa245e2ba02d43b2fca8497>

After nearly 24 hours of drenching rain helped quench a series of devastating wildfires in eastern Tennessee, local officials turned to cleanup and recovery efforts even as they battled their own personal crises. Gatlinburg Mayor Mike Werner said discussions were under way about re-opening the resort city as early as Friday, which would give business owners and residents their first look at the damage in a city that has been closed since Monday night. Werner has spent the better part of two days standing in front of TV cameras saying "everything is going to be OK," all while he lost the home he built himself along with all seven buildings of the condominium business he owned. "I really can't dwell on it that much. I think of others that have lost theirs, and it keeps my mind off of our problems," he said while fighting back tears. "It's really hard, it's really tough."

Associated Press: The Latest: Obama talks with Tennessee governor about fires

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=TKJApsg4

SC State Wire

President Barack Obama has spoken with Tennessee's governor to offer support for residents gravely affected by recent wildfires in the Great Smoky Mountains. A statement from the White House says Obama asked Republican Gov. Bill Haslam for an update on the ongoing response to the wildfires, which destroyed hundreds of buildings and killed seven. The White House says Obama expressed his condolences for the lives lost in the fire. He also offered his sympathies to those residents who may have lost their homes or business. Obama also committed to providing the assistance necessary to combat this fire. The White House says FEMA approved a grant earlier this week to help mobilize the resources necessary for an effective response.

Independent Mail: Rain fails to douse Pinnacle Mountain fire

<http://www.independentmail.com/story/news/local/2016/11/30/rain-fails-douse-pinnacle-mountain-fire/94663510/>

Kirk Brown

This week's rain has prevented the Pinnacle Mountain fire from spreading, but the wet conditions also

are hampering firefighting efforts. The fire that has burned 10,560 acres is now 62 percent contained, according to a Wednesday morning update from the Pinnacle Mountain Fire Joint Information Center. For the second consecutive day on Wednesday, crews were not dispatched to the fire lines due to the concern over the safety of wet roads, slick terrain and soaked ground, according to the update. An approaching cold front moved into the area Wednesday afternoon. The front was expected to dump up to an inch of rain, which officials expect will help increase containment of the fire.

Associated Press: Deadly storms add to drought, flood and fires plaguing South

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=MhLdnY6r

Jay Reeves

Five people were killed in two states after at least 13 twisters damaged homes, splintered barns and toppled trees in parts of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee, the National Weather Service confirmed. At least a dozen more people were injured early Wednesday, adding to a seemingly biblical onslaught of drought, flood and fire plaguing the South. The storms tore through just as firefighters began to get control of wildfires that killed seven and damaged or wiped out more than 700 homes and businesses around the resort town of Gatlinburg, Tennessee. In Alabama, the weather system dumped more than 2 inches of rain in areas that had been parched by months of choking drought. "It looks like the rapture happened up there," said church member Steve Hall, referring to the end-times belief of many Christians.

Tornadoes Across Southeast:

Associated Press: The Latest: Officials: At least 4 tornadoes hit Mississippi

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=Jni1qBaY

SC State Wire

The National Weather Service has confirmed at least four tornadoes struck Mississippi during Tuesday's severe weather outbreak, and could confirm more. The longest tornado stretched for 20.5 miles through Rankin and Scott counties, with top winds of 100 mph and a path 300 yards wide. It destroyed one home and damaged at least 12 others. Another twister stretched 9 miles through Clay and Monroe counties with top winds of 110 mph and a path 200 yards wide. It damaged structures, flipped a UPS truck and downed part of a Tennessee Valley Authority high-voltage transmission line.

Associated Press: Possible tornadoes track south of I-85 in Carolinas

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=2oOaRteE

SC State Wire

A series of severe storms tracked from Greenville through Charlotte, North Carolina, damaging some homes and knocking down trees. No injuries were reported. Tornado warnings were issued Wednesday evening as the storms rapidly moved just to the south of Interstate 85. The National Weather Service says trees fell on several buildings and homes in Simpsonville. Tree damage was reported in Chester and York counties. The weather service also says at least one building was damaged in south Charlotte and a tractor trailer was blown over.

The State: National Weather Service signals the 'all clear' as severe weather moves out of the area

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article118067038.html>

Rachael Myers Lowe

Tornado warnings were issued in northern part of the state as a line of violent thunderstorms rolled through the state Wednesday evening. Radar indicated a possible tornado in Lancaster County as people in Fort Lawn, Indianland, Lancaster, Elgin and Irwin were urged to take cover until 7 p.m. Severe thunderstorm warnings reached into northern areas of the Midlands.

Greenville News: Daylight reveals damage in Simpsonville

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/2016/12/01/daylight-reveals-damage-simpsonville/94709710/>

Michael Burns

After setting behind dark, wet, furious clouds that are believed to have unleashed a tornado, the sun rose through a clear sky over the Golden Strip Thursday morning to reveal battered homes, toppled trees and a narrow path of damage cut west to east through downtown Simpsonville. A handful of minor injuries were reported, according to emergency management officials. Thousands spent at least part of the night without power, according to Duke Energy. Some damage was reported in Anderson County, too, but the Simpsonville area seemed to be hit hardest as a line of severe thunderstorms blew through amid a tornado warning issued by the National Weather Service around 4:15 p.m. Greenville County Schools spokesman Elizabeth Brotherton said GCS will be fully operational today and that the schools will work with families whose house or commute is affected by the storm.

Hurricane Matthew Recovery:

Sun News: 2016 was most active hurricane season to hit SC in 12 years

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/news/local/article118056198.html>

Emily Weaver

Bonnie. Hermine. Julia. Matthew. This was the most active hurricane season to hit the South Carolina coast in 12 years, but Wednesday marked its end. "It's certainly the most active season we've had in a while," said Tim Armstrong, meteorologist with the National Weather Service office in Wilmington, N.C. "It has been active, obviously capped off with Hurricane Matthew, but even just in the number of weak storms that we've had, it was certainly a memorable season." Armstrong said the last time four tropical systems impacted the Carolina coast was in 2004. And although predictions aren't out yet for next year's season, Armstrong says early signs point to a weather pattern that may make for a lighter season next summer.

Morning News: Nichols remains in dire straits, slowly recovering after Hurricane Matthew

http://www.scnow.com/news/local/article_4e5f8672-b769-11e6-bd44-93e16429ae1f.html

Joshua Lloyd

Before Hurricane Matthew, the town of Nichols in Marion County had a population of about 400 people. As of Wednesday, only about 30 people had returned to their homes full time. The rural town was struck hard when Hurricane Matthew rolled through the area in October, causing flooding and damaging or destroying most of the homes. Though all city functions -- like water, sewer and debris cleanup -- have been restored, most of the homes in Nichols aren't safe to inhabit and have not cleared county inspection. Mark Lewis, police captain and spokesman for the town, said there has been a significant effort by residents and various organizations to recover homes but there's still a long way to go. "At first debris was all furniture and clothes, but now its flooring, drywall and stuff like that. You can definitely see the progress," he said. "It's a slow process but we can see some things starting to shape -up."

Island Packet: Doubling of fees becomes election debate in Sea Pines

<http://www.islandpacket.com/news/local/article118061158.html>

Teresa Moss

The doubling of fees to cover Hurricane Matthew costs in Sea Pines has spurred debate in an upcoming election for seats on the Community Services Associates Board. The board last week unanimously approved a one-time special assessment that will double fees for property owners in 2017. Three incumbents on the board say the additional \$1,018 fee on top of property owners' annual \$1,028 fee for next year is needed to cover an estimated \$5.3 million in hurricane costs. Charlie Miner, Mark Griffith and Michael Tucker are all running to keep their seats on the board. "We are doing this so we can keep paying the bills," Tucker said Wednesday. "No one wants it, but we have to do it." Two challengers for board seats — Sharon Lowe and Michael Telepchak — said Wednesday residents shouldn't have to bear an overwhelming majority of the costs.

Savannah River Site/MOX News:

Aiken Standard: SRS MOX project, U.S. Cyber Command move forward in funding bill
http://www.aikenstandard.com/news/srs-mox-project-u-s-cyber-command-move-forward-in/article_57ef4a7a-b745-11e6-9159-7f2a725dc131.html#comments

Thomas Gardiner

Lawmakers may have budget solutions to pull the nation off a continuing resolution and get funding updated for the current fiscal year. The National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2017, which started Oct. 1, 2016, now has the signatures it needed to move out of conference committee and to a vote. The NDAA versions that passed the Senate and House did not match up, so the bills moved to the House-Senate Conference Committee in July to begin ironing the differences. As the fiscal deadline approached at the end of September, Congress passed a continuing resolution to keep 2016 funding levels in place until this bill could make its way through. Several key parts of the NDAA apply directly to Aiken County and the broader Central Savannah River Area.

South Carolina News:

Associated Press: DOJ files statement of interest in 'disturbing schools' law
http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=XHC0hV9L

SC State Wire

The U.S. Department of Justice has filed a statement of interest in a lawsuit that challenges South Carolina's "disturbing schools" law, which makes it a crime to act in an obnoxious manner on school grounds. The Post and Courier of Charleston (<http://bit.ly/2gLjUwC>) reports that the law was written nearly a century ago to protect girls' schools from intruders. The law has since been used to arrest students in South Carolina schools. In August, the American Civil Liberties Union helped file a federal lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the law. The plaintiffs are seeking a court order that would stop police from enforcing the disturbing schools law. The DOJ's filing on Monday states that it's the department's duty to protect children's behavior from being criminalized.

WIS: Lott responds to US DOJ action in SC student's suit against 'disturbing schools' law
<http://www.wistv.com/story/33826019/sheriff-lott-responds-to-statement-filed-by-us-doj-in-sc-students-suit-against-disturbing-schools-law>

Jeremy Turnage

The sheriff of the Richland County Sheriff's Department, Leon Lott, released a statement on Wednesday in regards to the "statement of interest" filed by the U.S. Department of Justice in a case before the federal court system. The case is related to a violent incident between a former Spring Valley High School resource officer and a student that was recorded and posted to social media. Sheriff Lott's statement reads...

Island Packet: You suspected it: South Carolina has some of the worst drivers in the US, study says
<http://www.islandpacket.com/news/state/south-carolina/article118023608.html>

Mandy Matney

A new report confirms what many of us long suspected — the Palmetto State is home to some of the worst drivers in the nation. South Carolina ranks third worst in the nation for drivers, according to a study by CarInsuranceComparison.com. The report ranks states based on information from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Each state is ranked based on fatality rate per 100 million vehicular miles and on citations for failure to obey, drunken driving, speeding, and careless driving. Here's how SC ranked in specific categories, according to the survey...

Local News:

The Herald: As a York County deputy, would you be able to make split-second, life-and-death decisions?

<http://www.heraldonline.com/news/local/article118099923.html>

David Thackham

On a day highlighted by key decisions related to how law enforcement officers perform under pressure, members of several media outlets across the Rock Hill and Charlotte region got a chance to role-play different scenarios officers face. Here was one: Frenzied shouts echoed across a room as an acting deputy nervously crept through the door of a dimly lit home. There were few details on the call: a domestic dispute. But that was all the acting officer knew. Stepping into the home, she called out, "Sheriff's Office! Calm down, sir!" The man, in the throes of a lover's quarrel, would not calm down. Instead, he pulled what appeared to be a gun and took aim at the deputy. She fired her service weapon and wounded the man, who fell to the floor. The scenario ended.

Post and Courier: College of Charleston students stand up to sexual assault in first-ever SlutWalk
http://www.postandcourier.com/news/college-of-charleston-students-stand-up-to-sexual-assault-in/article_5e95eab0-b735-11e6-9533-c792c042167e.html

Gregory Yee

For College of Charleston students like Kelsey Arcalis, the stand against sexual assault has never been more important. Arcalis, a sophomore majoring in international studies, was one of at least 60 people who attended the college's first-ever SlutWalk on Wednesday. The event aims to mobilize people in hundreds of cities and college campuses to raise awareness of "rape culture" and call for an end to "slut shaming." "I think this is absolutely perfect," she said. "We just need more people hearing about it. I know where I grew up, it was a taboo thing and I love how we're talking about it here." The threat of sexual assault is very real in Charleston, Arcalis said. What's needed is awareness and support.

Aiken Standard: Cuban-American in Aiken reacts to Fidel Castro's death
http://www.aikenstandard.com/news/cuban-american-in-aiken-reacts-to-fidel-castro-s-death/article_ececed9e-b718-11e6-8011-8391a77e4723.html

Christina Cleveland

Reaction from around the world is continuing to pour in following the death of Fidel Castro, a controversial political figure who governed Cuba for roughly five decades. World leaders have reflected on his death while critics have strongly spoken out against his leadership. For Cuban-American and Aiken resident Carlos Garcia, founder of RCS Corporation and chairman of the Aiken Technical College Commission, Castro's rule is something he said he would like to forget. "It's the kind of thing I've been trying to forget for 48 years. It's been so unpleasant," said Garcia, who was 12 years old when he and his family left Cuba for America in the 1960s. "There's been so much cruelty coming from that regime. If I don't hear his name ever again, it'll be just fine. I try to concentrate on my life here as an American and try to forget the whole thing."

Independent Mail: End of an era: Out-of-state company buying Medshore
<http://www.independentmail.com/story/news/local/2016/11/30/majority-medshore-ambulance-service-sold-tenn-company/94680176/>

Nikie Mayo

Greg Shore, the chief executive officer of Medshore Ambulance Service, plans to sell the majority of the company he has owned for 40 years. Shore confirmed Wednesday to the Independent Mail that he is entering a deal with Priority Ambulance, a national company headquartered in Knoxville, Tennessee. Shore said Medshore will keep its name and he will retain a minority ownership stake in the company. He declined to say how much of the company he would still own or to disclose the price of the part that is being sold. Shore said he will remain CEO of Medshore's South Carolina operations, which are headquartered in Anderson. The company's existing leadership team will also remain in place and daily operations will not change, he said. The deal between Medshore and Priority Ambulance is expected to close no later than January, according to officials on both sides of the transaction.

President-elect Trump News:

Associated Press: Trump will face tough questions on future of nuclear arsenal

<http://bigstory.ap.org/18ab24d96b3842e4a034a35e3d4acaeb>

For all the concerns raised in the presidential campaign about Donald Trump's fitness to command America's nuclear arsenal, the immediate questions he's likely to face as president aren't about launching these weapons, but modernizing them. He'll have to make politically fraught decisions about a U.S. nuclear arsenal that in some ways has become decrepit. Among the open questions: Can the U.S. get by with fewer? Is it time to take some off hair-trigger alert? Trump's transition website says he "recognizes the uniquely catastrophic threats posed by nuclear weapons and cyberattacks," adding that he will modernize the nuclear arsenal "to ensure it continues to be an effective deterrent." The questions left unanswered: How much modernization is enough, and in a world of widening cyber threats, how vulnerable are U.S. nuclear weapons?

Associated Press: Trump to take victory lap at factory, rally

<http://bigstory.ap.org/907a70972fb343cbb5a9b3a4dbe965e>

President-elect Donald Trump is poised to take a victory lap on Thursday, appearing first in Indiana to salute workers at a factory that he made a campaign promise to save and then in Ohio on the first stop of a "Thank You Tour" to honor the supporters in states that gave him his stunning victory. The Midwest swing will be the first time Trump, who has shown an early inclination to revel in the role of showman-in-chief, has barnstormed across the country since the campaign. And both stops will feature Trump declaring victory after a campaign built on the lament that "we don't win anymore" as a nation. But some questions remain about the extent of victory at Carrier, which announced this week that it will keep an Indianapolis plant open. In February, the heating and air conditioning company said that it would shutter the plant and send jobs to Mexico, and video of angry workers being informed about the decision soon went viral.

Associated Press: Tough-on-corruption NY prosecutor tells Trump he will stay

<http://bigstory.ap.org/e5ecca1a8a03478487af84f0beffd508>

Financial cheaters and corrupt politicians beware: One of America's hardest-charging prosecutors isn't going anywhere. Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara's brief announcement that he has agreed to stay on in the Donald Trump administration signals in at least one way that the president-elect may be serious about keeping his campaign promise to crack down on corruption. Bharara, who was once lauded on the cover of Time magazine as the man who is "busting Wall Street," has in the past few years set his sights on prosecuting more than a dozen state officeholders, including New York's two most powerful lawmakers. And lately he has hinted that there may be more prosecutorial surprises to come. "I said I would absolutely consider staying on. ... I agreed to stay on," the quick-witted Bharara told reporters in Trump Tower after his meeting with Trump on Wednesday, adding that the billionaire businessman asked him to remain "presumably because he's a New Yorker and is aware of the great work that our office has done."

Associated Press: Presidential election recount set to begin in Wisconsin

<http://bigstory.ap.org/6201004f83824538b1a04afb75d3e598>

The first candidate-driven statewide recount of a presidential election in 16 years is set to begin Thursday in Wisconsin, a state that Donald Trump won by less than a percentage point over Hillary Clinton after polls long predicted a Clinton victory. The recount requested by Green Party candidate Jill Stein carries none of the drama of the Florida presidential recount of 2000, when the outcome of the election between Al Gore and George W. Bush hung in the balance. Almost no one expects Stein's push for recounts in Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania to result in a Clinton victory over Trump. "This is certainly not Bush v. Gore," said Wisconsin's chief elections administrator Mike Haas. But still, county election officials across Wisconsin have hired temporary workers, expanded hours and dusted off recount manuals to prepare for the work of retabulating nearly 3 million ballots.

World News:

Associated Press: Brazil team honored as experts study possible fuel problem

<http://bigstory.ap.org/b078855f48f947bebb6cce8bcf693971>

Simultaneous tear-filled tributes were held at packed stadiums in Colombia and Brazil for the victims of this week's air tragedy that claimed 71 lives when a chartered plane crashed while ferrying a scrappy, small-town soccer team to the finals of a prestigious South American tournament. The tributes took place Wednesday night as crash investigators aided by dramatic cockpit recordings were studying why the British-built jet apparently ran out of fuel before slamming into a muddy mountainside just a few miles from Medellin's international airport. In the sometimes chaotic exchange with the air traffic tower, the pilot jet requested permission to land because of "fuel problems" without making a formal distress call. A female controller explained another plane that had been diverted with mechanical problems of its own was already approaching the runway and had priority, instructing the pilot to wait seven minutes.

Associated Press: Miami celebrations at Castro's death shock those in Havana

<http://bigstory.ap.org/19096bc97bd540daa8e936a4ad713180>

For more than a decade, Maria Vazquez's store had a special gift basket to celebrate Fidel Castro's death. For \$24.99, it includes a bottle of cider with the label "only open after Fidel's death," and toilet paper bearing the Cuban leader image. She's sold more than 250 since Castro's death at 90 was announced Friday night. "It's a way to close the chapter," said Vazquez, who moved from Cuba to Miami when she was 8. Fifteen years ago she opened her store selling Cuban goods like domino tables and pleated guayabera shirts. Some Cuban-Americans have been celebrating Castro's death with jubilation and vulgar humor, calling it a well-earned release after decades of exile and insults from the man they blame for ruining their homeland. In Cuba, the bawdy reaction to Castro's death has shocked and offended even critics of the government, who are taken aback by the celebration of any death with dirty jokes. "It really seems pretty sick to me," said Ernesto Ortega, a 42-year-old souvenir salesman in Old Havana. "I can't understand one person celebrating the death of another."

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