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Date: 2/19/2013 6:46:25 AM
Subject: Clips - Tuesday, February 19, 2013

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Governor Nikki Haley News

Herald-Journal: Haley is right to push for infrastructure improvements (Opinion)

Fix roads and bridges

<http://www.goupstate.com/article/20130217/OPINION/302171016/1128/opinion>

Editorial

Gov. Nikki Haley is correct in urging lawmakers to spend new money on fixing the state's roads and bridges. Doing so would not only help the state's economic future, it would also prevent further budget chaos in future years. Over the past decade, the General Assembly has followed a predictable pattern. When times are good and state revenues are on the rise, lawmakers spend every dime the Board of Economic Advisors predicts the state will bring in. They save only what they are forced to by the state constitution. They spend it all, and they spend it on new programs that have to be funded the next year and every year after that.

Note: Poor roads and bridges are a safety issue for South Carolinians, and as the governor pointed out, an obstacle to continued economic development. The state will not be able to continue to convince companies to move or expand their operations here if our roads and bridges are in disrepair. Spending the new money on infrastructure would help the state fix one of its critical needs. It would create needed jobs for those who would do the work. And it would help stabilize the state budget. Lawmakers should follow the governor's advice.

The State: SC Has Additional \$163 Million To Spend, Panel Says

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=gKepy008

Adam Beam

Gov. Nikki Haley's money tree fell on Friday as the state Board of Economic Advisors added \$163 million to the state's budget. The new money means lawmakers have \$6.9 billion to spend in the state's general fund for the fiscal year that starts July 1. House budget writers meet next week to begin deciding how to spend that money.

Note: Haley wants to use the first \$26 million of the new money to cut state income taxes for the average South Carolinian by an average of \$29. She wants to use the rest of the money to repair the state's infrastructure, focusing on the 421 bridges that the state maintains that are so structurally deficient that they have load restrictions.

Greenville News: Support builds for road spending

Haley wants to use surplus; others call for bold action

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130217/NEWS/302170012/Support-builds-road-spending>

Tim Smith

Some legislative leaders support Gov. Nikki Haley's call for using most of the state surplus revenue for road and bridge needs, while others said they aren't sure how much of the money should be used and want to see other plans debated first. Their comments to GreenvilleOnline.com came as support appears to be growing for two legislative initiatives to address the state's crumbling infrastructure — a bond bill and redirecting the revenue from the sales tax on vehicles.

Note: "Allocating close to \$100 million in one-time new money is another good first step in addressing the state's infrastructure crisis, and we commend Gov. Haley for again being proactive in working to create a climate that will foster economic development," said Otis Rawl, president and chief executive officer of the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce.

Post and Courier: Road funding plan not enough (Opinion)

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130217/PC1002/130219304/1021/road-funding-plan-not-enough>

Editorial

The state's cash-strapped Department of Transportation would get an extra \$100 million a year in dedicated

revenue under a plan recommended by House Speaker Bobby Harrell. The funding would help, but it's still a half measure. Or less. Rep. Harrell, R-Charleston, would shift the state tax collected on motor vehicle sales to the DOT. He reasons that auto-related taxes should go toward maintaining and building state roads.

Note: Gov. Nikki Haley also has proposed to put an additional \$100 million into the highway fund, mostly from new revenues expected in the state's general fund. Heralded as a funding solution for state roads, it badly underestimates the state's road funding needs...Both the Harrell and Haley proposals would have the benefit of providing some new funding, as well as broadening revenue sources for the DOT.

Greenville News: State added to offshore plan

Drilling Act crucial to safe oil and gas exploration, congressman says

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130218/BUSINESS/302180080/State-added-offshore-plan>
David Dykes

U.S. Rep. Jeff Duncan has introduced the South Carolina Offshore Drilling Act, which he said would add the state to the nation's five-year plan for offshore exploration and production. It would be a crucial step in safely developing the state's natural resources, said Duncan, a Laurens Republican who represents the 3rd Congressional District.

Note: Last week, Gov. Nikki Haley and the governors of North Carolina and Virginia sent a letter to Interior Secretary-Designate Sally Jewell, encouraging her to abandon federal opposition to drilling off the Atlantic Coast, where production has been blocked for decades.

The State: Giant foreign lumber mill stokes SC dispute

State government support for foreign co. at center of SC forest dispute

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/02/17/2636646/state-government-support-for-european.html#.USL7UaVUPfg>
Sammy Fretwell

Not much happens in this speck of society, except for the sporadic flow of log trucks rattling toward a little sawmill on U.S. 21 south of Orangeburg. For years, the mill has operated in obscurity, steadily cutting trees into lumber for market. Soon, however, a giant competitor from Europe could be on the mill's doorstep – a prospect that is generating questions about the mega-mill's effect on existing lumber operations and the forests that supply them.

Note: Gov. Nikki Haley and the S.C. Ports Authority are among those trying to help land the big saw milling operation, he said.

The State: Sawmill company has faced challenges in Europe

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/02/17/2637355/sawmill-company-has-faced-challenges.html#.USL7aqVUPfg>
Sammy Fretwell

Klausner, a private Austrian company that operates two saw mills in Germany, draws praise for its lumber milling process and its ambitious efforts in the business world. But it also has had dust-ups with competitors, a skirmish with an environmental group, and financial struggles related to the economy.

Associated Press: DEW director turns in resignation

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=FiPhR1tQ
Seanna Adcox

The director of South Carolina's unemployment agency resigned Friday, following two weeks of criticism from legislators about the ending of one-on-one help at rural offices. Department of Employment and Workforce Director Abraham Turner handed his resignation to Gov. Nikki Haley, saying he is leaving for personal reasons, effective March 1, unless the Republican governor decides to change that date.

The State: S.C. unemployment director resigns

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/02/16/2634925/sc-unemployment-director-resigns.html#.USL7IKVUPfg>
Staff Report

The director of South Carolina's unemployment agency has resigned, effective March 1. Department of Employment and Workforce Director Abraham Turner turned in a hand-written resignation letter to the governor Friday.

Note: Haley says she wishes Turner nothing but the best. Haley spokesman Rob Godfrey says the agency's former director, John Finan, will return on an interim basis.

Greenville News: S.C. jobless agency chief to resign in wake of controversies

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130216/news/302160016/s-c-jobless-agency-chief-resign-wake-controversies>

Tim Smith

The executive director of the state's unemployment agency says he is resigning for "personal reasons" effective March 1. The resignation of retired Maj. Gen. Abraham Turner from the Department of Employment and Workforce came after weeks of questions and criticisms of the agency and its decision makers over controversies ranging from the state's unemployment improper payment rate, the announced closings of in-person unemployment services at 17 centers, job layoffs and employee raises.

Note: "I appreciate general Turner's — a lifelong public servant — devotion to our state and nation, and wish him nothing but the best going forward," Haley said Friday.

The State: Cayce Officials Still Mulling Deadly December Chase

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=pON4D1nU

John Monk

Audio files released by the S.C. Highway Patrol concerning the December high speed police chase from Cayce into Columbia tell a harrowing tale of an innocent bystander's sudden death and how police were helpless to get him out of a burning van.

Note: One of the victims was Chamberlain Branch, 48, the beloved governor's mansion supervisor and father of three school-age children.

The State: A roadmap to ethics reform (Opinion)

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/02/17/2635123/scoppe-a-roadmap-to-ethics-reform.html#.USL7U6VUPfg>

Cindi Ross Scoppe

Gov. Mark Sanford is fined for misusing state resources and campaign funds. Lt. Gov. Ken Ard is convicted for misreporting and misusing campaign funds. Sens. Jake Knotts and Kent Williams are reprimanded for accepting and concealing illegal campaign donations. Gov. Nikki Haley is cleared of illegally logrolling her position as a House member. House Speaker Bobby Harrell comes under SLED investigation for allegedly using his position to help his business and putting campaign funds to personal use. Shadowy organizations pour money into campaigns against incumbents, without giving any clue as to who they are, where their money comes from or how much they're spending.

Note: Special House and Senate panels have proposed significant changes, and last month Gov. Haley's Ethics Reform Commission unveiled an impressive package of proposals that would address nearly all of the problems. Over the coming weeks, the Legislature will sort through those proposals, with a goal of restoring public trust in our government.

Addition: *Danger zone*

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/02/17/2635174/danger-zonedanger-zonein-perspectiveabout.html#.USMAFKVUPfg>

The most intensive push to reform South Carolina's ethics law in two decades is being driven by a string of ethics scandals over the past three years, many at the highest levels of state government.

The State: Sunlight — the other part of ethics (Opinion)

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/02/19/2638581/scoppe-sunlight-the-other-part.html>

Cindi Ross Scoppe

It's a testament to how little S.C. officials think of the concept of operating government in public that many media interests have been wary of a proposal to close the biggest loophole in the Freedom of Information Act. It's not that they want to retain the loophole that exempts an entire branch of the government. Rather, they worry that trying to close it would derail efforts to pass a bill that aims to make the people already covered by the law actually obey it.

Note: They're all provisions that really shouldn't be necessary but clearly are, and they all were included in the report issued last month by the independent Ethics Reform Commission, appointed by Gov. Nikki Haley and chaired by former attorneys general Henry McMaster and Travis Medlock.

Post and Courier: Give voters a say in school chief (Opinion)

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130218/PC1002/130219239/1021/give-voters-a-say-in-school-chief>
Editorial

Most of the discussion about government restructuring continues to center around the creation of a Cabinet-level Department of Administration to supplant South Carolina's outmoded Budget and Control Board. But while that long-discussed idea gets hashed and rehashed, a Senate panel has actually advanced a major governance change: giving the governor the authority to appoint the state superintendent of education. Under the proposal, the voters would decide the issue in a statewide referendum, much as they did last year's initiative to have the governor and lieutenant governor run on a ticket.

Huffington Post: The Daring Dozen: Women to Watch for 2016

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/marlo-thomas/women-to-watch-2016_b_2661958.html?

icid=hp_home_gallery

Marlo Thomas

We've been talking about our hopes for a woman president since... well, since as long as I can remember. And for much of that time -- as with any long-sought dream -- the fantasy never quite lived up to the reality.

Note: Her dazzling photogenics aside (no, we are not supposed to focus on women politicians' appearance; but photogenics didn't hurt Kennedy and Reagan, either), Nikki Haley had the unenviable assignment of assuming the Governorship of South Carolina from Mark Sanford, whose scandalous "hike" to rendezvous with his extramarital lover ended his career at the Statehouse. But that hasn't stopped Haley from quickly solidifying her Republican bona fides as the state's first female Governor-- weighing in on such lynchpin issues as taxation, immigration and "fetal rights." Briefly floated as a potential vice-presidential candidate on the 2012 Romney ticket, Haley is daughter of Indian immigrants and, at age 41, the youngest current governor in the country.

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South Carolina News

The State: Legislature begins 2013 budget debate: 5 things to watch

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/02/19/2638796/legislature-begins-2013-budget.html>

Adam Beam

Legislature begins 2013 budget debate: 5 things to watch — South Carolina House budget writers meet today to begin crafting the state's \$23 billion spending plan for the fiscal year that begins July 1. Lawmakers will spend most of their time discussing the \$6.9 billion general fund, money that mostly comes from sales taxes, and corporate and individual income taxes

Greenville News: S.C. susceptible to cuts if sequestration kicks in, experts say

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130219/NEWS03/302190011/S-C-susceptible-cuts-sequestration-kicks-experts-say>

David Dykes

It has become more likely that the sweeping set of automatic federal spending cuts known inside the D.C. Beltway as "budget sequestration" will take place March 1, and southern states such as South Carolina could be among the hardest hit, economists said Monday. The Palmetto State is among the top 10 states with exposure to non-defense cuts, since federal spending amounts to 7.4 percent of the state's gross domestic product, according to Wells Fargo Securities economists Mark Vitner and Michael A. Brown.

Post and Courier: Proposed legislation prompts fierce pushback from home-schoolers across the state

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130217/PC16/130219223/1005/proposed-legislation-prompts-fierce-pushback-from-home-schoolers-across-the-state>

Diette Courrage Casey

Eleven-year-old Cooper Durand practiced typing on the family computer in the living room, while his 6-year-old brother, Nick, sat on the nearby couch reading. Their oldest brother, 12-year-old Aiden, played clarinet in his room, and 8-year-old Joseph listened to a book on CD. This is what home-schooling sometimes looks like at the Durands' home on James Island. Other times, it's all four boys crowded around the dining room table doing math problems. Or, perhaps, it's digging in the backyard garden, buying local milk from a Johns Island farm or learning about inventions at the Charleston Museum.

The State: SC House to consider proposal to make lawmakers' records public

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/02/19/2638784/sc-house-to-consider-proposal.html>

Jamie Self

The S.C. House will consider ending part of the exemption that lawmakers have from the state's sunshine laws. The state's Freedom of Information Act, which outlines the information that public officials and government bodies must make available to the public, currently exempts members of the General Assembly and their staff from disclosing memos, correspondence and working papers

Island Packet: Why SC's mental health data doesn't make the federal gun database

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/02/18/2637712/why-scs-mental-health-data-dont.html#.USL7LKVUPfg>

Gina Smith

Alice Boland aimed a loaded .22-caliber Taurus at an administrator and teacher at a Lowcountry school last week, according to police reports, but it did not fire because none of the eight rounds was in the chamber. SC lawmakers and others say they're stunned that Boland was able to walk into a Walterboro gun store, pass a federally required background check and buy the gun just three days before the incident last Monday. "This Ashley Hall incident could have been a horrific national tragedy," state Attorney General Alan Wilson said.

Post and Courier: S.C. bill to tighten mentally ill reporting

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130216/PC16/130219401/1005/sc-bill-to-tighten-mentally-ill-reporting>

Robert Behre

S.C. Attorney General Alan Wilson said Friday he and other law enforcement officials will urge the Legislature to improve reporting of those found mentally ill so they may not buy guns. The bill — to be discussed in detail Tuesday in Columbia — is a direct response to news that Alice Boland of Beaufort was able buy a pistol legally, despite having pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity in federal court.

Post and Courier: S.C. bill would require reporting of mental health records to database

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130219/PC16/130219146/1165/sc-bill-would-require-reporting-of-mental-health-records-to-database>

Andrew Knapp

Since a national database for background checks was created nearly 15 years ago, South Carolina has submitted records for 34 people banned from buying a firearm because of a mental illness. Provided by the FBI in October, the data makes the Palmetto State one of the worst in the nation when it comes to reporting such records.

Post and Courier: State lawmaker calls for law requiring reporting of potentially violent mentally ill people into database

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130218/PC16/130219198/1005/state-lawmaker-calls-for-law-requiring-reporting-of-potentially-violent-mentally-ill-people-into-database>

Andrew Knapp

A Charleston Democrat announced legislation this afternoon that would require the reporting of certain mental health records to a national database that determines whether someone can buy a gun from a retailer. Parents and students stood behind state Rep. Leon Stavrinakis as he discussed the bill outside Ashley Hall, where a woman with a history of mental illness pointed a gun at an official and pulled the trigger Feb. 4, according to the police.

Post and Courier: SEWE performance promises strong tourist season

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130217/PC16/130219221/1005/sewe-performance-promises-strong-tourist-season>

Dave Munday

If reports from this weekend's Southeastern Wildlife Exposition are any indication, Charleston is off to a strong start for the spring tourist season. Actual numbers for ticket sales won't be available until later this week, but organizers, exhibitors, visitors and restaurant owners were unanimously optimistic they may have witnessed the biggest crowds in the festival's 30-year history.

Greenville News: Rise of Internet learning creates haves, have-nots among students

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130217/NEWS09/302170009/Rise-Internet-learning-creates-haves-nots-among-students>

Ron Barnett

Jennifer Southers has flipped education upside-down for her math students at Hillcrest High School. Instead of coming to class and listening to a lecture, then going home and trying out what they learned on their own, they listen to a lecture on video before class and work on putting the new knowledge to practice in the classroom, where their teacher is there to help.

The State: SC's new nullifiers intent on blocking federal laws

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/02/17/2636706/scs-new-nullifiers-intent-on-blocking.html#.USL7WKVUPfg>

Adam Beam

When the U.S. Congress passes a law, can South Carolina refuse to follow it? To a growing number of Republican state lawmakers, who control the S.C. Legislature, the answer is yes. In the legislative session

that started in January – two months after Democratic President Barack Obama was re-elected – S.C. lawmakers have filed dozens of bills that would nullify federal laws.

Associated Press: SC pension fund rebounds in 2nd half of 2012

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

Seanna Adcox

South Carolina's pension fund investments rebounded in the second half of last year, pushing earnings above 12 percent for 2012 after fees. The fund is on its way to a successful 2013 and meeting long-term expectations, said Hershel Harper, chief investment officer for the state Retirement System Investment Commission.

Greenville News: State sues S&P in unfair-trade case

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130215/news06/302150070/state-sues-s-p-unfair-trade-case>

David Dykes

South Carolina's attorney general has sued Standard & Poor's Financial Services, alleging violations of the state's Unfair Trade Practices Act and seeking civil penalties against the McGraw-Hill Companies subsidiary, court records show. The state's lawsuit, filed in Common Pleas Court in Richland County, alleges S&P "systematically and intentionally" misrepresented that its analysis of structured finance securities was objective, independent and not influenced by either S&P's or its clients financial interests, court records show.

The State: Poor SC plaintiffs get payout

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/02/17/2636810/poor-sc-plaintiffs-get-payout.html#.USL7X6VUPfg>

John Monk

One of South Carolina's longest-running civil lawsuits has drawn to a close with some \$16 million in payouts to more than 3,000 mostly low-income people and \$13.5 million in legal fees and expenses to their six lawyers for 16 years of work. "I only wish my husband had lived long enough to see this," said Lois King, 65, an Orangeburg resident who recently received a \$5,000 check related to a loan she and her late husband, Ralph, took out more than 20 years ago. The money came in handy because she lives mostly on Social Security and some part-time cleaning work, King said.

The State: Police, lawmakers looking to make SC roads safer for mopeds

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/02/18/2637768/police-lawmakers-looking-to-make.html#.USL7laVUPfg>

Noelle Phillips

Jonathan Crouch understands why other motorists might get frustrated when they travel behind his moped. But the 29-year-old mechanic wishes they would be more patient for those who choose an affordable mode of transportation. "People don't really look out for mopeds," Crouch said. "They disregard them altogether. They only go 25 miles per hour and that slows traffic, which leads to road rage."

Post and Courier: Fear of gun control drives big crowd at Ladson gun show

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130216/PC16/130219274/1005/fear-of-gun-control-drives-big-crowd-at-ladson-gun-show>

Andrew Knapp

As Jason Mele watched people peering down the sights of Mossbergs, Bushmasters and Remingtons, he couldn't deny that something felt different this time. The popularity of the Charleston Gun & Knife show seems to soar whenever a Democrat is elected president or when a crazed man opens fire into a mall, theater or school.

Post and Courier: DHEC searching for kids to promote healthy eating, activity

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130218/PC16/130219204/1005/dhec-searching-for-kids-to-promote-healthy-eating-activity>

Lauren Sausser

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control is looking for children throughout the state who champion the importance of being healthy and staying active in their communities. In the past, members of the All-Health team have built school gardens, planned healthy eating policies and promoted biking and walking,

Herald-Journal: US deputy commerce secretary tours BMW plant

<http://www.goupstate.com/article/20130215/ARTICLES/130219751>

Trevor Anderson

U.S. Deputy Secretary of Commerce Rebecca Blank said Friday that Spartanburg County is a model for how the country can reinvigorate its manufacturing sector, drive innovation and boost its global competitiveness. Blank made a stop at BMW Manufacturing Co. and took a tour of the plant's X3 Sports Activity Vehicle assembly hall.

Note: SC Commerce Secretary Bobby Hitt was in attendance

Greenville News: BMW praised as industry model

Commerce official says company shows how U.S. manufacturing can succeed

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130216/business/302160015/bmw-praised-industry-model>

Amy Clarke Burns

U.S. Deputy Secretary of Commerce Rebecca Blank visited BMW on Friday where she used the automaker's success as an exemplar of the president's agenda for boosting American manufacturing. "This community has been a model for how we can reinvigorate manufacturing, drive innovation and boost local competitiveness," she said, a few yards away from workers assembling pieces of the X3, BMW's popular SUV that has helped drive its increasing success in recent years.

Note: SC Commerce Secretary Bobby Hitt was in attendance

Associated Press: A look at DEW's coastal conferences

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=cv6SCzWr

Staff Report

South Carolina legislators this week criticized the state's unemployment agency for what they called lavish, taxpayer-funded trips. The following details four conferences on veterans' services held during the tenure of outgoing Director Abraham Turner, as provided by the agency.

Greenville News: Officials won't comment on allegation that S.C. unemployment agency gave raises while cutting jobs

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130215/news/302150021/officials-won-t-comment-allegation-s-c-unemployment-agency-gave-raises-while-cutting-jobs>

Tim Smith

State unemployment officials aren't commenting about a senator's allegation that employees at the agency received \$437,000 in raises at about the same time as the agency decided to cut dozens of unemployment staffers, including those at rural workforce centers. Sen. Nikki Setzler, leader of Senate Democrats, disclosed the raises during a meeting of the Senate Labor, Commerce and Industry Committee on Thursday.

Associated Press: SC DOT to remove trees in deadly section of I-26

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=T5iCgtL7

Staff Report

The state Transportation Department plans to remove trees in a deadly section of Interstate 25 from Summerville to I-95 to reduce the number of crashes that cause fatalities and severe injuries. The Post and Courier of Charleston reported (<http://bit.ly/XFoUQV>) DOT also plans to install cable guardrails in the center of the median after the trees are removed from the nearly 30 miles of highway.

Post and Courier: Department of Transportation to remove trees from deadly span of Interstate 26

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130216/PC16/130219344/1005/departement-of-transportation-to-remove-trees-from-deadly-span-of-interstate-26>

Prentiss Findlay

To reduce fatalities and severe-injury crashes, the state Department of Transportation plans to remove trees in the median of Interstate 26 from Summerville to Interstate 95. The DOT also plans to install cable guardrails in the center of the median after the trees have been removed from the nearly 30-mile stretch of highway in Berkeley and Dorchester counties.

Post and Courier: Hold the stump grinders, DOT

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130219/PC1002/130219171/1021/hold-the-stump-grinders-dot>
Editorial

There are safety problems on I-26 between Summerville and I-95, as this newspaper has fully reported. But the solution shouldn't require that the median be cleared of trees along the length of the interstate. The idea of installing safety barriers is a good one. But does it really necessitate the removal of nearly 30 miles of

trees by the S.C. Department of Transportation?

The State: If a lawmaker gets a DUI and no one cares, did it happen?

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/02/17/2636784/the-buzz-if-a-lawmaker-gets-a.html#.USL7Z6VUPfg>

Adam Beam

A funny thing happened after news broke of state Rep. Bakari Sellers' October arrest for drunken driving. Nothing. No cries of outrage. No calls for Sellers to resign.

Post and Courier: Bill would bar candidates from taking contributions from some political groups

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130217/PC16/130219222/1005/bill-would-bar-candidates-from-taking-contributions-from-some-political-groups>

Stephen Largen

A new state House bill backed by high-profile Republicans aims to bar a class of political groups in South Carolina from giving direct campaign contributions to candidates. But there is uncertainty as to whether the proposal as written would accomplish that goal.

WLTX: SLED Could Make a Decision on Bobby Harrell Investigation Soon (Video)

<http://www.wltx.com/news/article/222058/2/SLED-Could-Decide-on-Harrell-Investigation-Soon>

Jennifer Bellamy

The South Carolina Law Enforcement Division could soon announce if it plans to launch a criminal investigation into House Speaker Bobby Harrell. Attorney General Alan Wilson's office asked for that investigation after receiving information from the South Carolina Policy Council questioning Harrell's ethics.

WIS: SC House Speaker dodging WIS open records requests

<http://www.wistv.com/story/21234570/wis-investigates-sc-house-speaker-under-state-investigation>

Jody Barr

Despite state law that says such records are to be kept for four years and two public records requests, one of which delivered directly to the Speaker himself, Bobby Harrell refuses to allow WIS to see his spending records for the previous four years. The Speaker of the South Carolina House of Representatives is under investigation after a conservative policy group requested the state's Attorney General's office look into how Harrell spent more than \$325,000 from his campaign account.

Greenville News: Graham still has questions about Benghazi

McCain: Vote on Hagel next week

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130218/NEWS/302180012/Graham-still-has-questions-about-Benghazi>

Clark Brooks

President Barack Obama said last week that "Congress is sort of running out of things to ask" about the Sept. 11 attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya. The "sort of" might be to account for U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham. Graham, a Seneca Republican, said Sunday that there are still plenty of unanswered questions, and "We still have no idea what the president did the night of Sept. 11."

Post and Courier: All 16 Dist. 1 Republicans make grass-roots pitch

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130216/PC16/130219272/1005/all-16-dist-1-republicans-make-grass-roots-pitch>

Robert Behre

Anyone thinking that the Lowcountry's tea party movement is becoming watered down was probably not among the hundreds who showed up Saturday to hear 1st Congressional District Republican hopefuls. The two-hour event, sponsored by FreedomWorks and held inside the Charleston Area Convention Center, drew more than 300 people and all 16 GOP candidates — more than any other event so far in the run-up to the March 19 primary.

Post and Courier: Pinkston touts his values, desire to serve

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130219/PC16/130219158/1005/pinkston-touts-his-values-desire-to-serve>

Robert Behre

Shawn Pinkston remembers his father coaching Little League as a way of giving back to the community, and Pinkston's campaign for the 1st Congressional District seat stemmed from the same thinking, a desire to give back. Of course, a lot has happened between Pinkston's youth and today, where the 38-year-old Daniel

Island lawyer finds himself among 16 Republicans hoping to win U.S. Sen. Tim Scott's old House seat.

Post and Courier: Chip Limehouse running for 1st Congressional District on his record

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130216/PC16/130219365/1005/chip-limehouse-running-for-1st-congressional-district-on-his-record>

Robert Behre

State Rep. Chip Limehouse has been in office longer than any of the 15 other GOP hopefuls in the 1st Congressional District race and is emphasizing all he has done in that time. "I'm an effective conservative who is used to getting things accomplished," the Charleston Republican said. "I know how to balance budgets."

Associated Press: Colbert Busch: Brother won't overshadow SC race

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=c28AnAlk

Bruce Smith

Elizabeth Colbert Busch remembers watching the funeral of Robert Kennedy on television, with her younger brother Stephen - now the star of Comedy Central's "The Colbert Report" - sitting in her lap. She said to herself, "Someday, if they let women run for office, I'm going to."

Washington Post: Colbert may give sister's campaign a boost

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/02/18/2637850/colbert-may-give-sisters-campaign.html#.USL7KaVUPfg>

Aaron Blake

From the moment she announced her South Carolina special-election campaign, Democrat Elizabeth Colbert Busch has been viewed as something of a novelty candidate. That's the downside of being the sister of comedian Stephen Colbert. The upside, of course, is that her brother is probably going to help her raise lots of money at consecutive fundraisers next weekend and by mentioning her campaign on his Comedy Central television show.

Associated Press: Ex-SC Gov. Sanford mentions mistakes in 1st TV ad

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=8wuvplcl

Jeffrey Collins

Former South Carolina Gov. Mark Sanford does not shy away from the scandal that consumed the end of his second term in his first television ad for the 1st District congressional race. Sanford opens the 30-second advertisement talking about how he fought to cut government spending and reduce debt.

Post and Courier: Sanford airs first TV ad; vaguely refers to affair

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130218/PC16/130219203/1005/sanford-airs-first-tv-ad-vaguely-refers-to-affair>

Schuyler Kropf

Mark Sanford refers to recognizing "a God of second chances" in his new TV ad for his 1st Congressional District run that also highlights his stances on cutting spending and reducing the debt. The ad is on now on district-wide cable TV and will expand to broadcast television next week.

Post and Courier: Santorum neutral on 1st District race

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130218/PC16/130219194/1005/santorum-neutral-on-1st-district-race>

Staff Report

Former Pennsylvania senator and presidential candidate Rick Santorum won't be making an endorsement in the Republican race for the 1st Congressional District seat. Speaking to Republicans in Mount Pleasant, Santorum said he has some "really good friends" in the race from his run in the S.C. presidential primary, but will stay on the sidelines.

Washington Post: Are they kidding — Mark Sanford?!

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/right-turn/wp/2013/02/17/are-they-kidding-mark-sanford/>

Jennifer Rubin

South Carolina's disgraced and disgraceful Mark Sanford — who lied to his staff and the public, went "walking on the Appalachian Trail," told no one of his whereabouts and wrecked his family — is running for Congress. He is madly playing for sympathy, telling crowds, "I am equally aware that God forgives people who are imperfect." This raises the question as to whether the people of South Carolina should forgive him, and moreover, whether forgiveness entails entrusting him with a new public office.

Associated Press: GOP candidates in 1st District meet in forum

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=L9DPXKRL

Staff Report

The Republican hopefuls for South Carolina's 1st Congressional District are scheduled to meet in a candidates' forum. The event is slated for Saturday in North Charleston and is sponsored by the FreedomWorks organization. The group describes itself as working to advance individual liberty and constitutionally limited government.

Associated Press: Lawsuit in SC settles after 16 years in court

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=lcZpJc4b

Staff Report

A lawsuit that made its way through South Carolina courts for 16 years is over. The State of Columbia reports (<http://bit.ly/XTtwqs>) that the class action lawsuit over whether people who take out a mortgage for their homes should be able to choose their own lawyer resulted in \$16 million of payouts to 3,000 mostly low-income plaintiffs and \$13.5 million in legal fees.

Associated Press: Clyburn being sworn in for second FCC term

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=4g3Z39PL

Staff Report

Charleston native Mignon Clyburn is being sworn in for her second term as a member of the Federal Communications Commission. Clyburn is being sworn in on Saturday in a ceremony at Charleston City Hall.

Associated Press: Flu outbreaks cancel visitation at 2 SC prisons

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=ArOtQA7j

Staff Report

A flu outbreak has caused authorities to cancel visitation this weekend at two prisons in Columbia. Corrections Department spokesman Clark Newsom said Saturday that visitation is canceled at Kirkland Correctional Institution and Goodman Correctional Institution.

Post and Courier: Land deal was on its way to S.C. State's board, according to letter

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130216/PC16/130219362/1006/land-deal-was-on-its-way-to-sc-state-x2019-s-board-according-to-letter>

Diane Knich

A deal to purchase a sprawling property in exchange for kickbacks to school officials was making its way to South Carolina State University's board for approval, according to a letter by former lawyer Edwin Givens, which the university released Friday. In the Oct. 31, 2011, letter to Richard Zahn, owner of the 121-acre Sportsman's Retreat, Givens stated the university officially intended to purchase the property for \$2.8 million, contingent on the approval of the school's Board of Trustees, the state Budget and Control Board and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Associated Press: Winthrop selects Butler provost as new president

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

Staff Report

Winthrop University has selected a new president despite concerns from some faculty members about her involvement with a libel lawsuit at her previous school. The school's Board of Trustees on Friday unanimously chose Jayne Marie Comstock as Winthrop's 10th president.

The Herald: Winthrop names woman new president

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/02/16/2635590/winthrop-names-woman-new-president.html#.USL7jKVUPfg>

Anna Douglas

Butler University's Jayne Marie Comstock will be Winthrop University's 10th president – the second female president in the college's more than 125-year history. The Board of Trustees voted unanimously to offer the job to Comstock during a meeting Friday.

Associated Press: USC showcases engineering, computer science week

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=pywRv92s

Staff Report

The University of South Carolina is celebrating national "Engineers Week" with activities including daily

speakers, workshops and displays of electric cars, robots and sustainable energy projects. The College of Engineering and Computing is hosting a series of guest speakers and daily lunch-and-learn sessions Monday through Friday. Topics include entrepreneurship, startup firms and engineering careers.

Pickens County News: Clemson faculty contribute to Oscar-nominated films

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130218/NEWS/302180074/Clemson-faculty-contribute-Oscar-nominated-films>

Julie Howle

Poised behind a computer screen in an office on Clemson University's campus, Jerry Tessendorf illustrates the hard work that goes into creating the stuff of movie magic. Earlier in his career, Tessendorf, who has served as director of Clemson's Digital Production Arts graduate program for about two and a half years, developed visual effects software that has been used in many movies, including the now Oscar-nominated film "Life of Pi."

Associated Press: Clemson hosting meeting on value of play

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=mj5lhx9j

Staff Report

Playing can be serious business. Starting Sunday, Clemson is hosting a conference put on by the U.S. Play Coalition. Organizers say the conference fosters discussions on the value of children's play by bringing together people from fields including education, medicine and psychology.

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Hyperlocal News

Greenville News: Fla.-based credit union to expand into S.C.

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130216/business/302160020/fla-based-credit-union-expand-into-s-c->

Angela Davis

South Carolinians will soon have access to a new federal credit union. Grow Financial, based in Tampa, Fla., said its goal is to open 15 branches throughout the state. The first three branches are planned for Columbia in 2013-2014. The credit union said it plans to further expand with branches in Greenville and Charleston.

Post and Courier: With a smaller cap, Cooper River Bridge Run projected to sell out in early to mid-March

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130216/PC16/130219287/1005/with-a-smaller-cap-cooper-river-bridge-run-projected-to-sell-out-in-early-to-mid-march>

David Quick

Even though the 36th Cooper River Bridge Run and Walk is seven weeks away, officials already are trying to forecast a likely sellout. The Bridge Run appeared ready to crest the 30,000 mark as the price to register went from \$40 to \$45. As of 3 p.m. Friday, 29,621 had signed up for the 10K on April 6.

Post and Courier: Charleston County School Board meetings long enough to run Cooper River Bridge Run — six times

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130219/PC16/130219156/1005/charleston-county-school-board-meetings-long-enough-to-run-cooper-river-bridge-run-x2014-six-times>

Diette Courrage Casey

In the time it takes the Charleston County School Board to finish a typical meeting, you could fly to New York City, roast a 12-pound turkey or watch the Academy Award nominated film "Zero Dark Thirty." And that's not counting the time the board spends deliberating behind closed doors in executive session.

Post and Courier: High-speed trains, ferries, monorails a prescription for I-26 congestion?

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130219/PC16/130219147/1005/high-speed-trains-ferries-monorails-a-prescription-for-i-26-congestion>

Prentiss Findlay

Crystal Frank Proctor spends 10 hours per week stuck in her car while commuting on Interstate 26. "I hate living in Summerville just because of the interstate," she said. The trip to her job as a paralegal on James Island typically takes an hour. And then there's the drive home after work.

Pickens County News: Security a concern at Pickens County schools

District seeks help to place resource officers in elementary schools

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130218/NEWS/302180076/Security-concern-Pickens-County-schools>

Julie Howle

School security discussed in Pickens: Pickens County school district leaders and county and local law enforcement officials discuss school security and possibility of getting resource officers in elementary schools.

Pickens County school district leaders have asked law enforcement, county and town officials to consider helping with resources and funding to get a school resource officer in all the district's elementary schools. "We all well know that we've had a lot of concerns about security after the Connecticut massacre," school board member Ben Trotter said, referring to a mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn.

Associated Press: Pee Dee transit authority is running out of money

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

Staff Report

The director of the Pee Dee Regional Transit Authority says if more money for the service doesn't surface soon, the state's oldest transportation authority may have to shut down. The authority's executive director, Chuck MacNeil, told the Morning News of Florence (<http://bit.ly/XTtwqs>) that the authority has eliminated routes, increased fares, reduced benefits and cut staff in an effort to save money.

The State: Columbia Metropolitan Airport traffic rebounds after 2011 lows

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/02/19/2638809/columbia-metropolitan-airport.html>

Roddie Burris

After dipping to a 10-year low in 2011, passenger traffic at Columbia Metropolitan Airport rebounded in 2012, topping the 1 million mark and climbing to a three-year high. Cargo shipped out of the airport also rose in 2012, airport officials said, increasing about 11 percent to 32,265 tons last year from 28,812 tons in 2011.

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National News

Post and Courier: Avert the sequester, and 'Fix the Debt'

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130219/PC1002/130219174/1021/avert-the-sequester-and-x2018-fix-the-debt-x2019>

Michael Brenan

As Americans look to a new year, they typically do so with some combination of hope, optimism, excitement, and enthusiasm. It's who we are, a land and people of unending potential, for whom anything is possible. But today, at least for the business community, we anticipate 2013 with something else, something more different and darker: Uncertainty. And we have the federal debt crisis and looming sequestration cuts to blame for it.

Greenville News: Gas prices still climbing

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130219/BUSINESS/302190012/Gas-prices-still-climbing-Woody-White>

How high will it go? That's the question on drivers' minds these days as they stare at the rolling numbers on a gasoline pump, racing faster with 32 straight days of higher per-gallon prices. Experts are offering mixed guidance on whether this might be one of those years when unleaded regular hits \$4.

USA Today: Full employment rebound relies on housing

Construction-sector employment still the key to real recovery

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130219/BUSINESS/302190015/Full-employment-rebound-relies-housing>

Paul Davidson

The labor market quietly reached a milestone of sorts last month. Private-sector employment topped its prerecession high — if housing-related sectors are excluded. The achievement, noted in an RBC Capital Markets study, shows much of the job market is chugging along.

Associated Press: Nebraska Sen. Johanns says he won't seek 2nd term

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/02/18/2638342/nebraska-sen-johanns-says-he-wont.html>

Grant Schulte

U.S. Sen. Mike Johanns of Nebraska announced Monday that he will not seek re-election in 2014, saying he wants a "quieter time" to focus on his family following a busy political career that included stints as governor and President George W. Bush's agriculture secretary. The Nebraska Republican announced that he was retiring from the Senate after one term. He said he and his wife, Stephanie, had decided that the time had come to end a public career that has spanned more than half of his life.

Associated Press: President Chavez returns to Venezuela from Cuba

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/02/18/2638013/president-chavez-returns-to-venezuela.html>

Staff Report

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez returned home to Venezuela early Monday after more than two months of medical treatment in Cuba following cancer surgery. Chavez announced his return in a series of message on his Twitter account, saying "we will continue our treatment here."

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