

Title: **Upstate legislator under fire for paving of road that leads to his home**
 Author: BY CASSIE COPE ccope@thestate.com
 Size: 64.79 column inches
 Myrtle Beach, SC Circulation: 61238



THE BUZZ

Upstate legislator under fire for paving of road that leads to his home

■ Cherokee County approved spending \$51,714 to pave road.

BY CASSIE COPE
ccope@thestate.com

State Rep. **Steve Moss**, R-Cherokee, has come under criticism for a newly paved road that leads to his home.

Cherokee County approved spending \$51,714 to pave the road with money from the county's transportation committee,

according to acting county administrator **Holland Belue**.

Moss said he went through the normal county process to get a road paved and "asked for no special favors."

"I made sure that I went by the book," said Moss, adding he spent his own money to get the road up to standards for it to qualify for the county

to take it over. The county took responsibility for the road in 2014, according to *The Gaffney Ledger*, an Upstate newspaper.

Currently, three taxpayers own property along the road, Moss said. However, paving the road opens up the area for future development, he added.

Moss said he will disclose the road paving on his state-required Statement of Economic Interest, where legislators disclose any gifts they receive and "any public

improvements of more than \$200.00 on or adjacent to (their) real property."

The money to pay for the road-paving project came from the Cherokee County transportation committee. Most county transportation committees are appointed by legislative delegations. But Cherokee County's County Council also is that county's transportation committee.

Typically, county transportation committees get money from the state's 16.75-cent-a-gallon gas tax, collecting 2.66 cents from every gallon sold.

However, in the state's 2015-16 budget, lawmakers approved sending \$216 million in state money to county transportation committees to repair roads. In the 2016-17 budget that took effect July 1, those committees received an extra \$50 million in state money.

As a legislator, Moss votes on state spending – including sending state money to county transportation committees. But, Moss added, he is not a member of the House panel that writes the state budget.

Moss is not the first legislator to be scrutinized in connection with state road spending.

In 2015, the S.C. Transportation Infrastructure Bank, whose members in-

clude Senate President Pro Tempore **Hugh Leatherman**, R-Florence, agreed to spend \$340 million in state money to help pay for Florence County road projects.

"We have a really chaotic system in South Carolina of jurisdiction over roads, and who's responsible for building them and maintaining them," said government watchdog **John Crangle**.

It would be better if the state had one entity in charge of determining how road money is spent, Crangle said. "This has been the problem for a long time – the political determination of how road money is spent."

DEMS TAKE SWIPE AT MULVANEY

U.S. Rep. **Mick Mulvaney**, R-Indian Land, predictably took heat from S.C. Democratic Coordinated Campaign last week.

Campaign co-chair **James Smith**, a state representative from Richland County, criticized Mulvaney for, among other things, his votes in favor of "turning Social Security over to Wall Street" and against the Export-Import Bank, which finances and guarantees loans by foreign companies to buy U.S. goods, including made-in-North-Charleston Boeing jets.

Fiscal hawks, including

Mulvaney, contend the

Ex-Im Bank is just another example of the government deciding economic winners and losers, adding big businesses like Boeing can afford to buy loan insurance in the private sector.

"These may be Mick Mulvaney's 'principles,' but to voters of the 5th District, they are nothing but a harmful extremist ideology," Smith said, noting Boeing is a major S.C. employer.

Of course, the Democratic state representative is backing Mulvaney's Nov. 8 Democratic challenger, former Biden aide **Fran Person**.

BUZZ BITES

● Columbia Attorney **Butch Bowers** is representing N.C. Gov. **Pat McCrory** in the legal battle over North Carolina's controversial HB2 law, which bans transgender people from using the bathroom of their choice.

It's nothing new for Bowers, who has represented S.C. Republicans in their legal and ethics skirmishes, including Gov. **Nikki Haley** and Lt. Gov. **Henry McMaster**.

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The annual fundraising dinner is named for two



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That will be a tougher sell in South Carolina, which claims Jackson as a native son, a claim disputed by that other Carolina.

● Come Clinton or high water: The S.C. Presidential

Inaugural Ball will be held on Jan. 19 at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and National Portrait Gallery, the South Carolina State Society said last week.

Title: **Lawmaker will get a smoother ride home**
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 Size: 54.40 column inches
 Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



THE BUZZ

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SEE BUZZ, 7A

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BUZZ

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Title: **Haley unrealistic about Mike Pence**

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Haley unrealistic about Mike Pence

When Gov. Nikki Haley assured us that as vice president, Michael Pence would “fix” Washington, she failed to mention that before Pence became governor of Indiana, he served six terms in the U.S. House. During those 12 years, Mr. Pence was not able to fix anything, as he was too busy leading the religious right and tea party in their obstructionist efforts to paralyze government in every way possible. His narrow and negative approach has continued during his term as governor.

We can, of course, understand Haley’s endorsement of Pence and the nature and context of their political friendship: They take direction, instruction and funding from the same well-heeled, conservative and uncompromising sources.

*- Cermette Clardy Jr.
Isle of Palms*

Title: **Ann Coulter takes a swipe at Gov. Haley**
 Author: BRISTOW MARCHANT THE STATE
 Size: 18.44 column inches
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Ann Coulter takes a swipe at Gov. Haley

Writer defends Trump remarks

BRISTOW MARCHANT
THE STATE

While defending Donald Trump's controversial comments this week about the Gold Star family of a Muslim American soldier, conservative writer Ann Coulter turned her fire on a seemingly unrelated target – S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley. In a column on the controversy surrounding Trump and the Khan family, Coulter argues that Muslims like the late U.S. Army Capt. Humayun Khan make up a small percentage of American casualties since Sept. 11.

"Muslim troops accounted for 0.2 percent of all U.S. troop deaths in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars," she wrote. "Southerners accounted for 38 percent of those killed in Iraq and 47 percent in Af-

ghanistan.

"What has South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley 'sacrificed' compared to the families of these men?," Coulter said of the governor, whose husband Michael Haley has deployed to Afghanistan with the S.C. National Guard during Haley's time in office.

Coulter then shifts to a call to put the Confederate battle flag back on display at the S.C. State House.

"How about Nikki put their flag back up?" she writes. "The Confederate flag won't lead to thousands of dead and maimed Americans, as Muslim immigration does. The only danger posed by the Confederate flag is that media elites will hold the South in even greater contempt than they already do, assuming that's possible."

Title: **Many reluctantly back Trump**
 Author: CASSIE COPE AND AVERY G. WILKS THE STATE
 Size: 59.21 column inches
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Many reluctantly back Trump

But some in SC lean toward Johnson

CASSIE COPE
 AND AVERY G. WILKS
 THE STATE

COLUMBIA - Despite GOP presidential nominee Donald Trump's unsteady performance, most S.C. Republicans continue to stand by their man.

But that support comes reluctantly from some.

Trump, they say, is the lesser of two evils, adding they cannot dream of voting for Democrat Hillary Clinton on Nov. 8.

"Sometimes, he has a tendency to speak before he thinks," said Steve Coleman, 61, a con-

servative from West Columbia. That tendency has brought a landslide of criticism to the bombastic billionaire real estate mogul this week.

Some Republicans cringed at Trump's feud with an American Muslim couple whose son died fighting for the United States in Iraq. Khizr Khan lambasted Trump last week at the Democratic National Convention for calling for a ban on Muslims entering the country.

Trump responded in a TV interview Sunday by noting Khan's wife stood silently by her husband, adding, "Maybe she wasn't allowed to have anything to say."

Those comments — the final straw in a GOP campaign marked by insults — led some Republicans elsewhere to switch their support to Clinton.

But that's not likely to hap-

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pen among S.C. Republicans, although some are leaning toward voting for Libertarian presidential candidate Gary Johnson.

'Totally inappropriate'

Sen. John Courson, R-Richland, disapproves of Trump's feud with the Khans, a Gold Star family. "I thought that was totally inappropriate," said Courson, a former Marine.

Still, Courson said he always has voted Republican for president — "sometimes with great enthusiasm, sometimes with not great enthusiasm."

Asked how much enthusiasm he felt about voting for Trump, Courson laughed. "I'm a traditional Republican, and someone like Marco Rubio had great appeal to me. I'm just going to leave it at that."

South Carolina's top Republicans do not want to discuss Trump.

Earlier this week, Gov. Nikki Haley expressed support for the Khan family.

Since then, she has declined to discuss Trump.

However, Haley has said she will support her party's nominee. Asked at the GOP convention if she would vote for Trump, Haley replied, "Of course."

Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster, the first statewide elected official in the country to endorse Trump, also did not weigh in on Trump's rocky week.

Trump's other missteps in the past week have included:

In an interview published Monday, Trump told USA Today he would hope his daughter, Ivanka Trump, would find another job if she were sexually harassed at work. Critics said the comment showed Trump — who publicly has defended Roger Ailes, a former Fox News executive accused of sexual harassment — doesn't get it. Women, they said, should not have to abandon their job or career because a man behaved inappropriately. Saying he loved babies when an infant started crying during a campaign event. Later, Trump said he was kidding, adding, "You can

get the baby out of here."

Refusing to endorse U.S. Sen. John McCain, R-Arizona, and U.S. House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wisconsin, in their re-election bids. Still, S.C. Republicans say their support of Trump has not wavered.

S.C. House Majority Leader Bruce Bannister, R-Greenville, said no state GOP leaders that he has talked to are willing to vote for Clinton, citing her record and lack of trustworthiness.

"If (Trump) will get his message back to fixing the system — and get away from sort of the small, personal issues that are a distraction — we'll be better off," Bannister said.

Jerry Rovner, who was an S.C. delegate at the Republican convention, said his support of Trump is unchanged.

"It's unfortunate that these kinds of stories get the headlines when they don't have much to do with what's going on in America," Rovner said.

Rovner said he is concerned about issues that will affect his children and grandchildren.

"I'm not concerned about

whether a baby's crying," Rovner said, predicting the fuss over Trump's stumbles will blow over. "Everything changes on a dime in this country depending on the headlines of that day."

Rep. Phyllis Henderson, R-Greenville, said she will support Trump because he is the GOP nominee. But, she added, "Nothing that Donald Trump says surprises me anymore."

Henderson, who supported Carly Fiorina in the S.C. GOP primary, said she can't vote for Clinton. "It doesn't really matter to me that she would be the first female president."

What does matter, Henderson said, is ensuring there is not another eight years of liberal Supreme Court rulings and overreaching federal policies. Henderson added she can't vote Libertarian, saying she is a political realist. "A Gary Johnson vote? It's just a waste."

Trump a 'dangerous combination'

But, to some Republicans, a vote for Libertarian Johnson is the best alternative.

In his Twitter description, Sen. Greg Gregory, R-Lancas-



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ter, includes that he is “Not a Trumpster.”

Gregory traces his dislike of Trump to the candidate’s disparaging comments a year ago about Sen. McCain’s military service. “He’s a danger-

ous combination of megalomania and ignorance,” Gregory said of Trump.

Gregory added he cannot support Clinton, contending her presidency would hobble the U.S. economy. “You’ll see very few Republicans public-

ly endorse Clinton” in South Carolina, said Gregory.

But, Gregory added, Trump isn’t acceptable. “With Trump you have no idea what you’re going to get because he has no idea,” Gregory said.

So, Gregory will vote for Libertarian Johnson, a former Republican governor of New Mexico. “I’m not going to be one of the people on the sidelines to say I didn’t do anything to try to stop it.”

Title: **Bagley latest to file for Pickens County School Board**
 Author: RON BARNETT RBARNETT@GREENVILLENEWS.COM
 Size: 42.00 column inches
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Bagley latest to file for Pickens County School Board

RON BARNETT

RBARNETT@GREENVILLENEWS.COM

Two former educators – both named Betty – and a Pickens-area dad have filed to seek the three open seats on the Pickens County School Board in November.

Betty Bagley, a retired superintendent of Anderson District 5, has filed for the Clemson-area District 1 seat that had been held by Herb Cooper until his death on Tuesday.

Retired Easley High Principal Betty Garrison filed Thursday for the Easley-area District 5 seat now held by another retired educator, Judy Edwards, who decided not to seek re-election.

And Shannon Haskett, sales manager of Graceland Portable Buildings and father of a rising sixth-grader at Pickens Middle and a rising third-grader at Ambler Elementary, has filed for the Pickens-area District 3 seat now held by Alex Saitta.

Saitta has said he plans to seek another term but hadn't

filed by closing Thursday.

Filing closes at noon, Aug. 15.

Bagley told *The Greenville News* that she had no thought of running for School Board until she heard in late July that Cooper, who has been battling cancer, had decided not to run again.

"If Dr. Cooper was running, I would definitely not be running," she said.

She said she sees herself following the path he set during his 24 years on the board.

"Dr. Cooper appeared to me to be very student centered, visionary in the facilities needs of the district and wanting to promote best practices in the classroom," she said. "His was the type of boardmanship that you would want."

Bagley, who retired from District 5 in 2013, now works for the State Department of Education as a personalized learning

consultant and is an adjunct professor at Anderson University.

She grew up in Norris and graduated from Liberty High School.

She is a Ph.D. candidate in educational leadership at Clemson University, and she holds a bachelor's degree from Southern Wesleyan University, a master's of education from Clemson University and two education-related degrees from The Citadel.

She was appointed to serve on the Performance, Accountability and Standards for Schools (PASS) Commission by Gov. David Beasley in 1997 and the First Steps Readiness Board by Gov. Jim Hodges in 1999.

She was appointed by two state superintendents of education to serve on the Palmetto Unified School District Board of Trustees and now serves as Gov. Nikki Haley's appointee to the South Carolina Public Char-

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Board

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ter School Board.

Garrison, who was principal of Easley High from 2002-09, praises Edwards for her work on the board.

"I share that experience of serving as an educator to our young people, and I believe it has prepared me to contribute

and lead at the school board level," she said.

Garrison holds two master's degrees, from Clemson and Furman. She also attended the South Carolina School Leadership Executive Institute.

Haskett, a lifelong resident of Pickens County and a 1990 graduate of Pickens High School, holds a math degree from The Citadel.

He has been active in the PTA at Ambler Elementary and played a leadership role on a stakeholders group that proposed alternatives to closing Ambler and two other elementary schools a few months ago.

Ambler survived, but the board closed A.R. Lewis and Holly Springs.

"There is an opportuni-

ty for the District 3 school board member to truly collaborate with our appointed and elected officials throughout Pickens County so that working together, we can make the School District of Pickens County the most financially stable and educationally advanced school district in South Carolina," he said.

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**Betty
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**Shannon
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Tattered child safety net slowly mending

JAMIE SELF
THE STATE

COLUMBIA - Natalie Thompson says she whispered in her nephew's ear whenever she could. "Yeah, you going to be OK. ... You're going to be fine."

Despite her furtive promises to her nephew – meant to evade the boy's parents, whom Thompson was reporting to the S.C. Department of Social Services for abusing the child – 4-year-old Robert Guinyard was beaten to death with a metal rod in his home in 2013.

Today, the autistic boy's parents, convicted of homicide by child abuse, are serving life sentences. Recently, Robert's estate won a \$590,000 settlement from the state, according to Joyce Cheeks, the family's attorney.

The suit alleged Social Services ignored reports from Thompson and

others that Robert was being abused. Social Services had forewarning Robert's mother was dangerous, the suit added, having investigated her for child abuse before.

In his death, Robert became the face of scores of children who fatally fell through the cracks at the S.C. Department of Social Services. The 4-year-old was one of 67 children with prior Social Services records whose deaths were investigated by the state in 2013, one of 681 such child deaths investigated from 2009 through mid-June.

Two years later, South Carolina's long-ignored Department of Social Services is making progress toward improving its child-welfare services. But it still is struggling to enact needed reforms – mostly aimed at reduc-

ing child-welfare workers' caseloads and retaining employees.

Crippling turnover rates among child-welfare workers – exceeding 100 percent in Richland County and 39 percent statewide in 2014 – fell to 14 percent in Richland and a little more than 7 percent statewide during the first three months of this year, according to Social Services.

However, caseloads – while lower than four years ago, when some caseworkers had more than 100 children to protect at one time – still exceed the agency's new limit of 24 children for about half of front-line child-welfare workers.

In the state's general fund budget

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Child safety

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that took effect July 1, spending for Social Services surpassed the agency's pre-recession funding for the first time. The extra money has helped give pay raises to child-welfare workers. But those workers' salaries still trail what their peers were paid two years ago in two neighboring states.

A plan aimed at preventing children from slipping through the cracks at Social Services also has hit a major snag. The initial rollout of a new, statewide call-in system to screen reports of abuse and neglect was halted after reaching only about half the state's 46 counties. The rollout was paused because the new system was producing so many reports of abuse and neglect that Social Services, still understaffed, could not handle the calls, new director Susan Alford said.

Despite focusing on hiring more staff since 2014, Social Services still is climbing its way out of a nearly decade-old worker shortage. The agency lost 845 filled positions from 2007-08, before the Great Recession, to 2011-12 – when staffing bottomed out at 2,888 filled positions.

Long-lasting improvements at the agency could

take years to take effect fully, says child-welfare advocate Laura Hudson, noting it takes six months to train a caseworker and years more for that new worker to become good at his or her job.

Rebuilding workforce

The push to reform Social Services climaxed in 2014, when child-welfare advocates sounded alarms about the number of children dying under the agency's watch.

Critics blamed the deaths, in part, on child-welfare workers' heavy caseloads. Those caseloads contributed to widespread, high turnover among the agency's child-welfare staff.

S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley's Social Services director, Lillian Koller, resigned in mid-2014 amid mounting criticism and calls for new leadership.

Alford, Koller's successor, took over in December 2014 as lawmakers clamored for improvements at the agency, long in crisis.

The S.C. Legislative Audit Council issued a scathing review of Social Services shortly after Koller's exit. The report cited high worker caseloads and high employee turnover as serious problems, issues that



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had been threatening the welfare of children for years. The council had sounded the same alarms in reviews in 1985, 1991 and 2006.

Historically, Social Services has struggled to retain employees and fill vacancies.

In mid-2014, Social Services had 360 job openings. Turnover among child-welfare workers was 66 percent from 2011 to 2013, the Audit Council found.

Today, turnover rates have declined dramatically, officials say.

Turnover fell to 7.4 percent from January through March, down from 27 percent in 2015 and 39 percent in 2014.

In the first three months of this year, half of Social Services' 46 county offices did not lose a child-welfare worker – a stark reduction compared to last year, when only four county offices retained all their employees.

In this year's first quarter, the highest turnover rate at any Social Services' county office was 17 percent. Only 11 counties have turnover rates in the double digits. That is a marked improvement from 2014, when nine county offices had turnover rates higher than 50 percent, including Richland, where turnover was 104 percent. This year, turnover in the Richland office has dropped to 14 percent. In Lexington, turnover fell to 3 percent in the first three months of this year, down from 45 percent last year and 39 percent two years ago.

For some observers, the turnaround is hard to believe – “almost unrealistic,” said state Sen. Katrina Shealy, a Lexington Republican and member of a Senate committee that investigated the agency.

Alford, too, said the drop in turnover is promising. But, she added, the problem has not been solved.

Turnover could rise again and delay reaching the agency's goal of having no child-welfare caseworker manage more than 24 children, she said.

Alford said her goal is to correct the underlying causes of excessive turnover and high caseloads, and ensure each call reporting abuse and neglect is screened correctly.

Only those changes will lead to long-term improvements in the state's child safety net, she said.

Hiring is key

After taking over as director, Alford visited each of Social Services' 46 county offices. Employees told her that impossibly heavy workloads were the top reason that workers were quitting.

Now, Alford is betting that lowering workloads will help retain quality employees and improve services.

Since 2014, the agency has made progress toward lowering caseloads, once obscenely high. But it still is struggling to push caseloads down below its own, newly established limits.

Those limits say child-welfare caseworkers who assess families for potential abuse and neglect, and then work to help the family correct problems, should have no more than 24 children to look after. Also, foster care workers should have no more than 20 children to manage.

Still, as of June 20, about half – or 482 – of Social Services child-welfare caseworkers had more than 24 children to oversee. And 77 caseworkers had caseloads of more than 50 children. But that was down from 142 caseworkers who shouldered similar caseloads a year earlier.

Offering lawmakers a sense of what it would take to reach its new caseload goals, Alford said Social Services could have 80 percent of child-welfare workers managing caseloads within the agency's new lower limits by December. But that would require all new positions be filled and no turnover.

To lower caseloads and turnover rates, the agency started a drive to hire more caseworkers and pay them more in 2013, before Alford came on board. That year, Social Services requested 50 new positions after lawmakers questioned why – since 2010 – the agency had not asked for more employees despite its workers' oppressive caseloads.

To help with that effort, state lawmakers – with Gov. Nikki Haley's encouragement – are spending more than they have in a long time on Social Services.

In the budget that took effect July 1, general fund spending for Social Services is \$149 million, the highest level since 2007-08. That year, the agency received \$139 million from the state's general fund. Then, spending took a nose dive due to the recession.

“There are certain things that money can't buy,” Haley told *The State* newspaper recently, adding her goal is to improve the way that agencies operate before spending more on them.

South Carolina has more children in need of foster homes than it does families to shelter them, the governor noted. To address that shortfall, Social Services, with Haley's encouragement, has launched a program to recruit more foster families and make easier for them to start fostering children.

Haley also said giving smartphones to all front-line caseworkers has helped make their jobs easier.

“We've seen the caseloads go down,” she said. “We're not there yet. ... But I think we've seen some improvements.”

Before improving its child-welfare operations became a top priority, Social Services' focus had been elsewhere.

Taking office in 2011, in the wake of the Great Recession, Haley made jobs her top priority. Koller, Haley's former child-welfare director, focused largely on getting South Carolinians off welfare.

But lawmakers started hearing complaints that Social Services' child-welfare operations were in a shambles and children were dying as a result.

Testifying before a special Senate committee, Koller unnerved lawmakers when she told them the average caseload for child-welfare workers was six or seven. When critics objected that it was much higher, Koller later said the number was so low because it included trainees and supervisors, handling single cases.

After Koller's exit, Haley said she had no idea that Social Services, which reports directly to the governor, had caseload problems.



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In the state budget starting in mid-2015, lawmakers approved more than 280 new positions for the agency, including 177 child-welfare caseworkers and 67 caseworker assistants.

The newly created assistants help with paperwork and other time-consuming tasks that keep caseworkers from getting face time with families in crisis. They also give entry-level experience to workers with an interest in child welfare, creating – in theory – a pipeline of caseworkers.

Starting July 1, the agency has the OK to hire 171 additional child-welfare workers, including 51 new hires for second- and third-shift positions to follow up with families or respond to after-hours calls for help. The agency recently added late-shift workers in Richland and Greenville counties – two of the largest and busiest Social Services offices.

The agency also, for the first time, is hiring its own training directors – a move to provide year-round training for child-welfare workers, targeting topics that employees need the most help in.

“Things are definitely moving in the right direction,” said state Sen. Joel Lourie, one of the loudest critics of Social Services two years ago.

“The whole process of hiring and training caseworkers takes time,” said the Richland Democrat, who pushed for reforms as a member of the Senate panel that investigated Social Services. “But I look for continued improvement in the services they deliver as well as the caseloads going down.”

Higher salaries

Social Services also has given its child-welfare workers raises.

“It probably will in no way compensate them for all the things that they do, but it’s more equitable when you look at other states and what their entry salaries

are,” Alford said.

The pay raises were long overdue, say critics, who cite the difficulty of recruiting and retaining quality caseworkers when they can earn more in neighboring North Carolina or in other fields.

The average minimum starting pay for an S.C. caseworker was \$30,582 in 2014, up only slightly from \$29,797 eight years earlier, according to a state audit. Last year, the starting salary increased to \$33,640. On July 1, the starting salary increased to \$34,733.

The pay raises make S.C. child-welfare salaries more competitive than in Georgia, where caseworkers’ pay two years ago ranged from \$28,000 to \$34,000.

But the S.C. salaries do not compete with those in Tennessee. Two years ago, a Tennessee child-welfare workers with one year of experience was paid more than \$36,000.

Creating another challenge to retaining caseworkers, the 2014 Audit Council report found S.C. child-welfare workers can find higher paying jobs in their own communities – working at schools or for other organizations – or in other states. For example, a child protective services worker in Orange County, N.C., was paid \$45,677 a year two years ago, the audit found.

Problems reporting abuse

Of the 171 new Social Services positions that lawmakers approved this fiscal year, 52 workers are needed to help the agency carry out its plan to make it easier to report abuse and neglect, and ensure legitimate reports are investigated quickly and effectively.

A call-in system, intended to screen reports of abuse and neglect statewide, now covers only about half the state’s 46 counties. The system does not yet include Charleston or Greenville counties – two of the largest in the state.

Title: **Golf Cart Laws in South Carolina**
 Author: By Samantha Lyles Staff Writer syles@newsandpress.net
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Golf Cart Laws in South Carolina

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Driving through your neighborhood on a hot summer evening, you may notice that more and more of your neighbors and their kids are tootling around in golf carts. Sometimes they travel only within a subdivision or community, but some ambitious golf carters have been seen cruising along four-lane highways, untroubled by the idea that they might be vulnerable to a high-speed collision, or possibly a costly traffic ticket if spotted by law enforcement. If you or someone you know owns or operates a golf cart on public streets, here are a few things you need to know to stay safe and within the law.

- In South Carolina, only

licensed drivers over 16 years of age can drive a golf cart. It's illegal for children or unlicensed drivers to operate golf carts on public roads – even those within

their neighborhood. If you allow a child to operate your golf cart, you are criminally and civilly liable for any accidents or injuries that may result.

- Registration with the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles is required if you intend to drive your cart on public roads. A golf cart permit costs five dollars, and you must have proof of ownership and liability insurance. These permits last five years, but must be renewed if you change your address.

- In South Carolina you can only drive a golf cart during daylight hours, unless your municipality passes an ordinance allowing nighttime operation. Gov. Nikki Haley signed this new exception into law on June 8, and Darlington currently has no ordinances in the works on this issue.

GOLF CARTS ON 3A

Golf Carts

Continued from 1A

- Legally, you can drive your golf cart on secondary highways or streets with posted speed limits of 35 MPH or lower. You can drive across a highway or street with a higher speed limit, but you must stay within four miles of your registered address. When traveling, keep your driver's license, registration and insurance on hand.

- To be considered in road-safe condition, your golf cart needs functioning headlights, tail lights, and turn signals.

- You can be charged with DUI if you drive your golf cart while drunk, and open containers of alcohol are just as illegal in golf carts as they are in cars.

- Even though golf carts are low-speed vehicles, serious injuries are still possible, especially for children who fall from the vehicle while it is in motion. Make sure all passengers are seated, sober, and paying attention to their surroundings.

Title: All 46 counties certified as 'Work Ready'

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All 46 counties certified as 'Work Ready'

South Carolina is the first state to achieve that designation

From staff reports

Gov. Nikki Haley announced today that the final two counties, Jasper and Richland, have received certification through the South Carolina Work Ready Communities (SCWRC) initiative, making South Carolina the first state in the nation to become fully certified as work ready. All 46 counties have met the specified workforce and education goals.

Being fully certified will assist all regions of South Carolina in their efforts to attract and retain international business development due to its commitment to economic growth and development of a robust workforce pipeline.

"We couldn't be more excited to announce that

South Carolina is the first state in the nation to have every county become certified work ready. Team South Carolina's is paying off – we have seen our state become one of the most competitive environments for business development in the world, and we're just getting started," Gov. Haley said.

"Today is a day to celebrate as South Carolina becomes the first state in the nation to have every county certified work ready," said Cheryl M. Stanton, executive director of the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce. "With our commitment to the Work Ready initiative and the continued development of

a skilled workforce, it is not surprising that employment numbers have been at historic highs over the last year, and companies continue to expand and choose South Carolina as the place to do business."

The South Carolina Work Ready Community initiative provides a framework to strengthen economic development using a community-based approach, grounded in certifying counties as work ready.

To become a South Carolina Work Ready Community, each county had to reach or exceed goals in earning National Career Readiness Certificates (achieved through WorkKeys® testing), had to meet or exceed the three-year graduation rate

average or improvement percentage, and had to engage business support.

Chester County Supervisor Shane Stuart said this county's certification came from an ongoing effort.

"The main thing we did on the county level was to push people to take their WorkKeys and to register online. Basically we sent people to York Tech and to Adult Education to test. For anyone who needed help with testing, we worked with the Fort Lawn Community Center, who offered pre-test preparation as well. So, we have continuously pushed this out to folks," he said.

Title: **County councilman says convention experience unforgettable**
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County councilman says convention experience unforgettable

By LARRY HILLIARD

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Steven Blanton said the week he spent in Cleveland is not one he'll soon forget.

The Cherokee County councilman who went to Ohio as a delegate to the Republican National Convention said not only did the convention choose outsider Donald Trump as its presidential nominee but took steps to make the nominating process more "democratic."

Each day, the South Carolina Delegation would gather for breakfast and to hear from a prominent Re-

publican. On Wednesday, South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley addressed the delegation.

Blanton said he was impressed with the speakers at the convention, especially former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, conservative radio talk show host Laura Ingraham, and of course, Trump.

"I thought (Trump's) speech was really good," said Blanton, who initially supported Ohio Gov. John Kasich "He had a good message and talked about every issue."

Blanton also praised Trump's choice as running mate, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence.

"Pence was incredible," Blanton said. "If any conservative had reservations about Trump, he promised he would pick somebody who knew Washington."

Blanton said he was overwhelmed by the thousands of media at the RNC.

"Every other person was a media person," he said.

"They had 15,000 passes issued to the media."

Blanton said he was en-

couraged that the GOP is becoming more inclusive.

"Just looking at the floor, it was very diverse," he said. "We are a big tent party."

This was Blanton's first RNC, but maybe not his last even though he decided not to seek another term on county council.

"It was a terrific experience," he said. "It showed me better the process of how the party runs on a national level. It's a great show. It's the biggest political spectacle that a party can put on."