

Title: **lawmakers ask if gas tax hike would aid roads**
 Author: BY JERRY BELLUNE JerryBellune@yahoo.com
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Lawmakers ask if gas tax hike would aid roads

BY JERRY BELLUNE

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Gas tax hike supporters hope a change in governors will help their cause.

But state lawmakers who must approve a 2 cent a gallon increase are cautious.

Gov. Nikki Haley of Lexington opposed a gas tax increase unless lawmakers agreed to cut income taxes.

If Henry McMaster becomes governor, he might be more amenable.

"The price of gas isn't the issue for me," said Senate Majority Leader Shane Massey

who represents western Lexington County.

Massey asked if the state Transportation Department uses the millions of dollars they receive responsibly.

"Does their decision-making process give us confidence that SCDOT will use money responsibly in the future," he said, "and what is the best way to provide money so that agency can do what we all expect?"

Another Lexington County lawmaker, Sen. Ronnie Cromer

said, "If a motor fuel user fee were approved, it should not be used for any other reason other than maintaining roads."

He said he is opposed to gas taxes being used for building new roads.

"But let's say that to fix Malfunction Junction (the traffic-snarled I-20 at I-26 junction), one or two new roads would have to be built to straighten out the congestion we have there.

"I may favor some of the money being used for a new

road in that situation.

"If we are talking about using it to build a new interstate, then I would most probably be against using money for that."

Newly-elected House member Micah Caskey of Cayce said he would only support a gas tax increase if the money goes exclusively for roads repairs.

He said he believes reforms are needed in the way the transportation department is operated before people are asked to pay more in gas taxes.

Title: **Big changes coming in our state**

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Big changes coming in our state

The first month of the new year continues to be filled with news on the national and statewide levels. Donald Trump's inauguration as 45th president will be Jan. 20

South Carolina has been in the spotlight, too. The U.S. Senate is expected to confirm South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley's appointment as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations this week. Once she is approved, Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster will become governor, serving the remaining two years of her term.

Congratulations to our Clemson Tigers, who won the college football national championship in Tampa, Fla., this month defeating Alabama 35-31!

And, here in the Dutch Fork, we had our first snowfall of the year on Jan. 7. We're just beginning winter, but spring's not far behind. In my front yard, my Breath of Spring shrubs are blossoming with white flowers and first daffodils are pushing up.

CONGRATULATIONS TO BEN Griffin Garris and Breanna Kennedy, both seniors at Spring Hill High School. American Legion Post 193 in Chapin and Post 193 Auxiliary sponsored and sent the students to Boys State and Girls State respectively last summer. After that, they were selected to attend Boys Nation and Girls Nation. Only two boys from Boys State and two girls from Girls State are selected for Boys Nation and Girls Nation. American Legionnaire Bill Lindsay said it's a tremendous honor. The Post recently recognized both students.

CHAPIN THEATRE COMPANY'S annual gala is Jan. 20, 7-9 p.m., at the Chapin Chamber of Commerce, 302 Columbia Avenue. The event is free, so come on out and learn more about Chapin Theatre and membership, meet the directors, actors and volunteers and enjoy food, drink and fellowship.

The 2017 season begins with "Messiah on the Frigidaire, which runs Jan. 27-29 and Feb. 2-5.

JAN. 29 IS PAIL Sunday at Lake Murray Presbyterian Church. Members of the church are taking time to pray for individuals and families in our community who are grieving the loss of

a child or children to a pregnancy or infancy loss. They also are honoring the lives of these children. The loss may have occurred recently or years ago. The church thanks everyone for taking the time to pray for those who have ex-

perienced this type of loss and remember their children.

On this Sunday, yellow roses will be displayed. These roses are a gift from Presbyterian women. When a loss of this kind occurs at Lexington Medical Center, a yellow rose adorns the door of the mother to make staff and visitors aware and be more sensitive to the loss. Yellow

also has become a color to symbolize hope for the future.

If you or someone close to you has experienced a pregnancy or infant loss, the church invites you to attend worship on PAIL Sunday and take a yellow rose home with you. Ministry members also will be available after worship that day to talk with anyone who wants to share their story or simply needs a hug. Deacons also will be available. For more information this ministry, please email LMPCPAIL@gmail.com.

SAVE THE DATE for Greater Irmo Chamber of Commerce's 2017 Gala and Awards Presentation Feb. 24, 6:30-11 p.m.. Start making plans now to join the chamber for a glamorous evening with fun for all, cocktails, dinner, dancing and casino entertainment. The event will be at the Columbia Conference Center, 169 Laurelhurst Avenue, Columbia. Call (803) 749-9355 for more information. Visit the website: <http://www.greaterirmochamber.com>. Single tickets cost \$100; couples' ticket is \$175.

CHAPIN CHAMBER OF Commerce's Artist Spotlight of the Month is on Beth Cavanaugh. A native South Carolinian, she attended the Columbia Museum of Art School, studying under Catherine Rembert. She was represented by Wickwire Gallery in Henderson, NC, until they closed in 2014. She was featured artist of the month in 2007 while at Wickwire, and the same year was spotlight artist at the Chapin Chamber.



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Her art was selected by the Saluda Shoals Foundation for holiday cards in 2008 and 2009. In 2010, she obtained her own working studio, Beth's Songbird Studio. She has juried a number of shows in South Carolina. Some of her work is included in private collections in Arkansas, California, Florida, Kansas and both Carolinas.

Beth has memberships in the National Watercolor Society, SC Watermedia Society, Crooked

Creek Art League and National Audubon Society.



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AROUND CHAPIN & IRMO

Title: **Legislators:McMaster's rise could be good for SC**
 Author: BY JOSHUA LLOYD Morning flews jlloyd@florencenews.com
 Size: 48.20 column inches
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Legislators:McMaster's rise could be good for SC

BY JOSHUA LLOYD

Morning News
 jlloyd@florencenews.com

FLORENCE — As lawmakers in Washington, D.C., prepare to vote on South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley to become the next U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, state officials are prepping to work with a new governor.

Henry McMaster, the current lieutenant governor, is poised to move into the governor's spot to finish the final two years of Haley's term.

Though McMaster hasn't publicly stated his stances on many of the key issues facing the state — roads, pension, education and tax reform — lawmakers from the Pee Dee say a new governor could be good for progress on these issues.

Florence Republican Rep. Phillip Lowe said one of the largest changes in state legislation this year will be McMaster's take-over as governor.

"I think we'll see less vetoes and more willingness to work with us on these issues," he said. "I think McMaster will be a little easier to please. He'll be looking to build some consensus in both chambers and solve some prob-

lems that we haven't been able to the past few years, like roads. We're hoping for more communication and understanding, and hopefully he'll be willing to compromise and work with us to get some good bills passed."

It's been widely speculated that McMaster will run for the state's top spot in the 2018 gubernatorial election.

Rep. Jay Jordan, a Florence Republican, said the next two years will give McMaster a chance to prove to the people of this state that he can be an effective governor.

"I think this will be his audition for the people of South Carolina," Jordan said. "He'll have a couple years to prove that he can

work with the legislature and get things done for our state. I hope at the top of his priority list are two of the most critical issues and that's infrastructure and education. We'll have to wait and see."

Sen. Ronnie Sabb, a Democrat

from the Williamsburg area, is somewhat leery of McMaster's right-leaning track record but is optimistic about the change of pace.

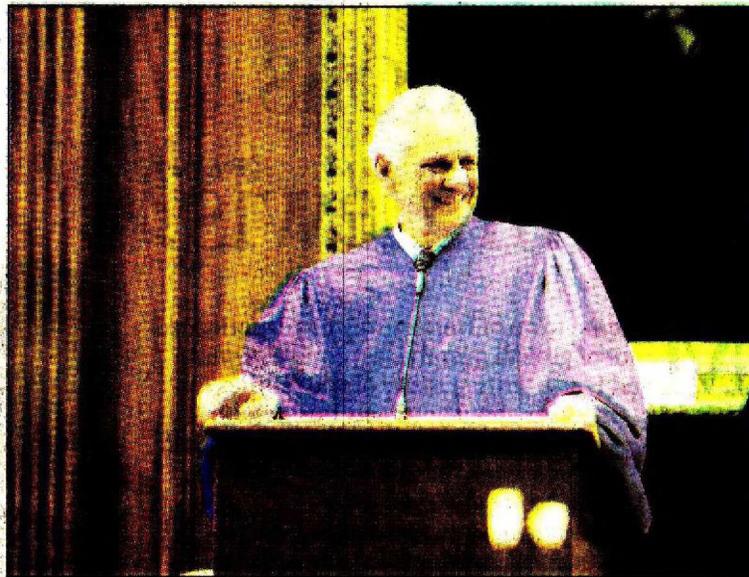
"I have a lot of respect for Lt. Gov. McMaster, but you can tell he's all conservative," Sabb said. "I would hope that in his ascension to the governor's mansion he stays in the middle on the issues. I do think he has the ability to discern what's best for the state as a whole, not just one side."

Rep. Terry Alexander, a Florence-area Democrat, said there's a largely unknown factor about a McMaster governorship, but the climate in Columbia points toward excitement.

"We'll see what he becomes. It's a different role than what he knows," Alexander said. "He's not just presiding over a chamber; he's presiding over the

entire state. Either way, we're excited about what he'll bring to the position. We don't know where he stands on some of the issues, and we see that as an opportunity."

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JOSHUA LLOYD/MORNING NEWS

Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster presides over the South Carolina Senate on opening day of the 2017 state legislative session.

Title: **legislators:McMaster's rise could be good for SC**
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legislators:McMaster's rise could be good for SC

BY JOSHUA LLOYD
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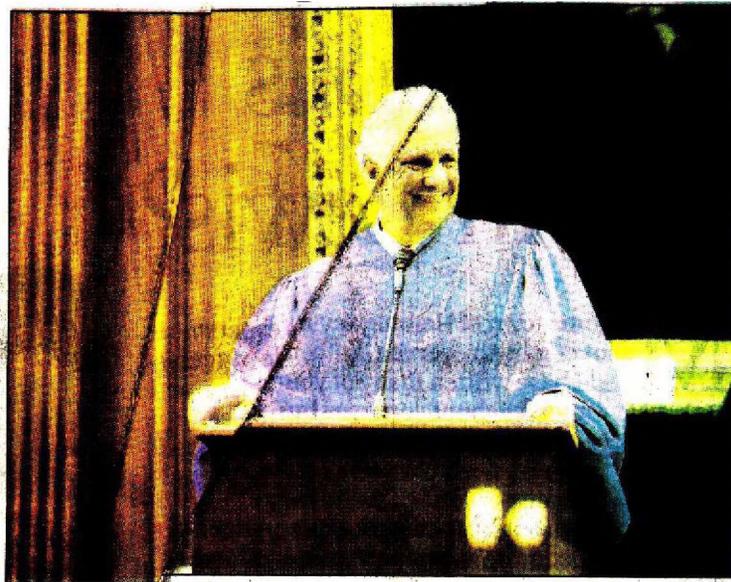
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JOSHUA LLOYD/MORNING NEWS

Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster presides over the South Carolina Senate on opening day of the 2017 state legislative session.

Title: **Haley reflects on accomplishments in office, but downplays flag**
 Author:
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Haley reflects on accomplishments in office, but downplays flag

Gov. Nikki Haley took a victory lap around a legislature Wednesday with which she didn't always get along.

"When I was first elected, I heard over and over again from governors around the country that this would be the best job I would ever have," she said in her final State of the State address prior to expected confirmation soon as the new ambassador to the United Nations. "I didn't understand what they meant back then – and if I'm honest, some days, especially during the legislative session, I didn't agree with them.

But after six years as the state's pilot, Haley described South Carolina's condition as "blessed" for having moved forward and, in part, for steering the state from being a punch line for late night comedians.

Her bellwether accomplishments have been economic: the addition of more than 85,000 jobs, \$21.5 billion in capital investment and a drop in unemployment from 11.1 percent to 4.4 percent. And while she didn't fully get her way with legislators on restructuring or ethical accountability for lawmakers, both were mentioned as being improved in her six years as governor.

Haley also recognized the state's huge public education system, despite some positive changes, still needs a lot of work. "Every South Carolina child deserves a quality education, regardless of where he or she is born and raised, regardless of who his or her parents are or what they do," she told legislators convened in the House chamber. "And as the

elected leadership of the state, it is our obligation to give it to them."

And then the kicker: "We failed in that obligation for too long."

Yes we have. It might have helped education over the last six years if Haley had spoken up like this louder and more often. Maybe standing up taller for public education would have reduced the billions of dollars of underfunding it has suffered during the 14 years that she and her one-time mentor, predecessor Mark Sanford, were at the helm.

On Wednesday night, Haley admitted to state lawmakers that fixing education wasn't for the lack of trying, although the issue didn't get nearly as much attention as her laser focus on creating jobs and economic development. Sometimes, she said, the job seems so big and daunting that it seems that educational solutions are too complex.

Nevertheless, she urged the legislature to change the state superintendent into a cabinet, not elected, position. She also noted progress in reframing the education funding formula to account for poverty, and gifted and talented students. She mentioned new reading coaches pushed by legislators, better technology and incentive pay for some teachers.

Haley is right to celebrate these changes, but they're mostly changes around the edges – changes that don't help rural kids get an education that's on par with kids in Greenville or Charleston. But the governor was also savvy enough Wednes-

day night to realize that the state has a long way to go.

While Haley has much to celebrate in her six years as governor, we were surprised by how she downplayed what might become the accomplishment for which she is best remembered – the quick removal of the Confederate flag from the Statehouse grounds after the June 2015 massacre at Emanuel AME Church.

In her address, she didn't mention the words "Confederate flag." Maybe she didn't want to rub salt into wounds of some who may still be burning about the flag's fate. Instead, she simply stated, "I will remember the willingness of the people in this room to step into someone else's shoes, find genuine understanding, remove a divisive symbol of an oppressive past, and move South Carolina forward."

Haley and a plethora of state lawmakers who pushed to get the flag off the Statehouse grounds still deserve credit for what they did. But now, as the governor heads into a job that will be filled with negotiation, the state needs to continue to move forward to heal and confront its cruel past of racial injustice.

Through the years, Nikki Haley has been a punching bag for some policy proposals that disproportionately hurt poorer South Carolinians. Despite policy disagreements, all South Carolinians should recognize her public service and thank her for it.

Andy Brack is editor and publisher of Statehouse Report. Have a comment? Send to: feedback@statehousereport.com.

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Andy Brack
Statehouse Report

Title: **Haley's farewell message: I'll be back**

Author:

Size: 89.9 column inches

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Haley's farewell message: I'll be back

Serving as S.C. governor for 6 years 'the greatest honor of my life'

Editor's note: Gov. Nikki Haley delivered her seventh – and probably final – State of the State Address on Wednesday. Donald Trump has nominated her as his U.N. ambassador, and she awaits Senate confirmation. Here are excerpts.

The last few weeks have been a time of great reflection for me. When I walked into the State House this morning, it struck me that I have been doing so for 12 years.

What a road we have traveled together.

There have been good days, and there have been trying ones. There have been wins and losses, progress and setbacks, joys and frustrations. There have been times of great celebration and those of deep, devastating mourning.

As I have thought back on it all, one thing has become so clear to me: serving as governor of South Carolina is the greatest honor of my life.

In 2011, we were in the heart of the Great Recession. At the end of my first month as governor, our unemployment rate stood at 11.1 percent. Jobs were scarce. Economic anxiety was real. People were hurting.

The only chance we had to come through the downturn was if the state banded together. The challenge we faced was simply too large for us to confront in any other way.

That meant breaking from the traditional regionalism of the past and embracing the idea that we were one South Carolina. It meant understanding that a win for the Upstate was a win for the Low-

country, and a win for the PeeDee was a win for the Midlands. It meant committing, fully, to no longer competing

against each other but presenting a united front, a Team South Carolina that actually meant something.

The old way of thinking died. And magic happened.

We have announced 85,613 jobs. We have celebrated 672 projects – more than half of which were expansions. We have seen \$21.5 billion in capital investment. Our unemployment rate is now 4.4 percent. Every single one of our 46 counties has seen new jobs. Every one....

For as long as most of us can remember, our public schools have not been good enough. We simply haven't done enough to prepare South Carolina's children for the future.

Much of the dysfunction in our public school system was caused by simple problems with clear solutions.

Our funding formula was outdated and complicated and didn't address the needs of the children who most require the resources we can provide, so we changed it to account for things like poverty and gifted and talented students.

Too many of our kids were leaving the third grade without being able to read, so we made it mandatory that they be held back if they couldn't and provided reading coaches to make sure they could.

Schools in rural and high-poverty areas couldn't afford the technology necessary for a 21st Century education, so we

found a way to provide it to them.

Those same school districts struggle to recruit new teachers and to keep the ones they have, so we incentivized our educators to sign up with those schools, and when they

do, to stay.

None of this is to suggest that we have fixed everything that ails our public education system. But we brought fundamental change to a system that desperately needed it.

I don't presume to know what people will remember from my time as governor – I imagine it will be different for everyone. But I do know some of what I will take from the last six years.

I will remember that we brought a level of accountability to state government that never existed before, and that legislators now show their votes on the record, disclose who pays them, and no longer police themselves.

I will remember the willingness of the people in this room to step into someone else's shoes, find genuine understanding, remove a divisive symbol of an oppressive past, and move South Carolina forward.

I will remember that we got our fiscal house in order, and that during my time in office, no cabinet agency ran a deficit, all while we cut taxes, doubled our reserves, and reduced our debt service by half.

I will remember that we acknowledged South Carolina's shameful history on domestic violence, and gave voice to its



Title: **Haley's farewell message: I'll be back**
Author:
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survivors.

I will remember the shooting of an unarmed man by a North Charleston police officer, the hate-filled atrocity committed against 12 faithful

men and women in the most sacred of places, the 1,000-year flood, the loss of a precious child to a school shooting, and Hurricane Matthew. But above all, I will remem-

ber how the good people of South Carolina responded to those tragedies. What a blessing to serve such people. Thank you for giving our family this opportunity. Be-

cause of you, South Carolina will always be our home.

Don't forget about us. We're not going far. And we're already looking forward to coming home to this state we love so deeply.



courtesy of the S.C. PRESS ASSOCIATION

Gov. Nikki Haley enters the S.C. House chamber to give her State of the State Address to the S.C. legislature Wednesday night. The address will be Haley's last as governor if the U.S. Senate confirms her nomination as U.N. ambassador.

Title: SaCutvng the Tigers

Author:

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Saluting the Tigers

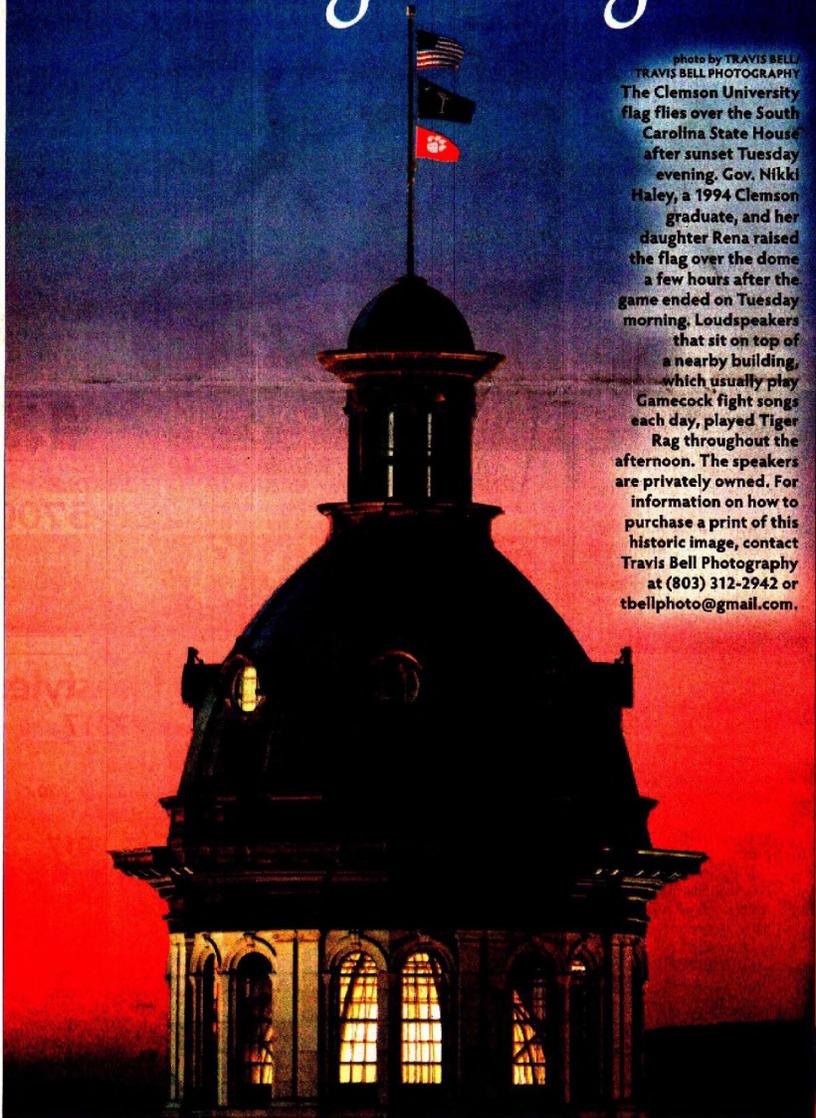


photo by TRAVIS BELL/
TRAVIS BELL PHOTOGRAPHY
The Clemson University flag flies over the South Carolina State House after sunset Tuesday evening. Gov. Nikki Haley, a 1994 Clemson graduate, and her daughter Rena raised the flag over the dome a few hours after the game ended on Tuesday morning. Loudspeakers that sit on top of a nearby building, which usually play Gamecock fight songs each day, played Tiger Rag throughout the afternoon. The speakers are privately owned. For information on how to purchase a print of this historic image, contact Travis Bell Photography at (803) 312-2942 or tbellphoto@gmail.com.

"If I wasn't proud enough of this state already, our Clemson Tigers winning the national championship took it to a whole new level. Raising that orange flag over the capitol dome is a memory I will treasure forever."



- From Gov. Nikki Haley's State of the State Address



ERIC ROWELL/For The Lancaster News
Several Lancaster County employees gather in front of the county administration building Thursday morning to raise Clemson University's tiger paw flag in celebration of the school's national championship win Monday night.

Title: **Storm leads to schedule changes**
 Author:
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Storm leads to schedule changes

Last weekend's winter storm, which led S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley to declare a state of emergency on Friday, Jan. 6, resulted in a number of local schedule changes.

◆ The Indian Land High boys and girls varsity basketball games against Nation Ford High School, originally set for Friday night, were played Thursday, Jan. 5.

◆ Lancaster County Parks and Recreation closed all its offices and recreation centers at 6 p.m. Friday. All games, activities and rentals scheduled for the weekend were canceled and will be rescheduled. For details, call (803) 285-5545.

◆ Indian Land High's wrestling team was slated to compete in the Bearcat Invitational at Rock Hill High School last weekend was canceled and has not been rescheduled yet.

◆ The Alive at 25 safe driving course originally scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 7, at Indian Land High School, has been rescheduled for Jan. 14. All those registered for the Jan. 7 program have been automatical-

ly transferred to the new date. (See story on page 5.)

◆ The Moriah Singles lunch scheduled for Jan. 7 was canceled.

◆ The Girl Scouts cookie rally scheduled for noon-2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 7, at Indian Land Middle School has been moved to Jan. 21. The rally is open only to Girl Scouts, not the public. No cookies will be sold at the training event for the Girl Scouts.

◆ Auditions for Community Playhouse of Lancaster County's presentation of "Hairspray" have been rescheduled for 7 p.m. Jan. 15 and 16 at the University of South Carolina Lancaster's Bundy Auditorium. For details, visit www.facebook.com/theatreatcplc.

◆ "POLTER-HEIST," the murder mystery dinner theater scheduled for Jan. 7 has been rescheduled for March 3. Doors will open at 6 p.m., with dinner at 7 p.m. For details, call (803) 289-1486.

– Staff reports