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To:
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Subject: SC Front Pages – Friday, November 20, 2015

SC Front Pages – Friday, November 20, 2015

The Post and Courier

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Friday, November 20, 2015

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Charleston, S.C. \$1.00

S.C. tourism back on solid ground

Campaign helps boost industry after \$35M flooding impact



FILE PHOTO: ZOLLNER/SAFI

Heavy rains and high tides caused major traffic delays as streets flooded downtown in October in Charleston.

BY GAVIN JACKSON
and MAYA T. PRAHITU
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mprahitu@postandcourier.com

COLUMBIA — South Carolina's vital tourism industry has rebounded from a \$35 million hit it took from last month's historic flooding, thanks in part to a national marketing campaign that the state — where most people want to go — is clear.

Folly Beach Mayor Tim Goodwin credited the campaign for helping to get the word out that the beaches were open.

"We didn't really see a major downturn just because of the time of year. I haven't heard any of the businesses or rentals saying it just killed us," he said.

pc Poll

Do you think the state's tourism industry will be able to completely recover from impact of October's historic flooding? Go to postandcourier.com/polls to vote.

Isle of Palms Mayor Dick Cronin said the island experienced many canceled reservations the first two weeks of October but things returned to normal thereafter.

"Is it going to break the bank? I wouldn't think so," he said.

Charleston County saw a 6 percent drop in occupancy during October. Attractions such as the South Carolina Aquarium, historic houses, the plantations and Patriots Point on average saw a 27 percent

decline in attendance, said Perrin Lawson, deputy director and vice president of business development with the Charleston Area Convention and Visitors Bureau.

National news coverage was a factor.

"We fielded an inordinate number of calls from people who were just convinced that we were underwater," he said.

Following a House flood panel meeting Tuesday, Toni Nance, director of governmental affairs for the S.C. Parks Recreation and Tourism Department, said the \$18 billion-a-year industry has rebounded after torrential rains coupled with high tides along the coast and burst dams caused widespread flooding from the Midlands to the Lowcountry.

"We've been seeing increases in the tourism numbers and revenues, so we think that this hopefully will be short-lived and we'll be able to make up for lost ground," Nance said. "Any hit is difficult, but because the economy has turned around, this was a blip, but we feel that with our efforts and our partner's efforts around the state ... hopefully, we'll be able to recover from it."

Scores of flooded neighborhoods, rescues and washed-out roads and bridges were aired on national news shows for days after up to 2 feet of rain fell on parts of the state in early October, raising fears it would lead travelers to avoid South Carolina or cancel reservations.

Please see **TOURISM**, Page A8

S'ville curbs recycling

Contractor takes only paper, cardboard after Chas. County closure

BY DIANE KNICH
and MONICA KREBER
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mkreber@journalclem.com

Charleston County's closure of its aging recycling center sent ripples across Dorchester County.

One of them hit the town of Summerville this week, causing its recycling collection contractor to announce it would pick up only paper and cardboard from curbsides, but not cans, bottles, plastic or glass.

The move frustrated Summerville resident Jim Hamilton, who received a notice about the abrupt change Tuesday.

It's "a step backwards" in keeping the Earth clean, Hamilton said. "Recycling is kind of near and dear to our family."

Please see **RECYCLING**, Page A6

2 more arrested in slayings

Still no suspected triggerman named in quadruple homicide

BY CHRISTINA ELMORE
and MELISSA BOUGHTON
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mboughton@postandcourier.com

Two more people were arrested this week in connection with the quadruple homicide near Holly Hill, but it's been four months since the fatal shootings and there has yet to be anyone charged with pulling the trigger.

Dominique Marquell Washington, 26, of U.S. Highway 78 in Ladson, was charged Wednesday with obstruction of justice and an Orangeburg County magistrate denied bail. Sheriff's Office spokesman Richard Walker said. A second person also was charged and denied bail, though that person's identity has not been released.



Washington

Please see **HOMICIDE**, Page A5

A&E broadcast today puts Charleston, race in spotlight

Includes Pharrell Williams singing at Emanuel AME

BY ADAM PARKER
aparker@postandcourier.com

The domains of church, Charleston and Hollywood entertainment intersected on Nov. 1 when superstar singer Pharrell Williams came to town to sing at Emanuel AME Church, a move meant to be part of a two-hour A&E broadcast called "Shining a Light: A Concert for Progress on Race in America."

"Shining a Light," taped this week at the Shrine Auditorium in Los An-

geles, will be aired at 8 p.m. Friday on various A&E networks.

Featured will be Bruce Springsteen, Smokey Robinson, Ed Sheeran, Rhinoceros, Gladiators, Sting, Jamie Foxx, Zac Brown Band, Sia and John Legend, among others. Williams' performance at Mother Emanuel will be included in the show.

It will be followed at 10 p.m. by "Shining a Light: Conversations on Race in America," a one-hour special featuring segments of conversations on racial inequality and violence in Baltimore; Charleston; Ferguson, Mo.; and other places.

A town-hall style discussion was taped Nov. 2 at Emanuel AME.

Please see **SHINING**, Page A6

Inside



LOCAL
John Kasich stops at N. Chas. Navy Yard business center. **A4**

STATE
Road map to fix rural schools emerges during study. **A5**

NATION
Study finds more Mexicans leaving U.S. than coming. **A11**

House OKs tough barriers for Iraqi, Syrian refugees

Obama labels response to Paris attacks 'hysteria'

BY ERICA WERNER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Responding swiftly to the terror in Paris, the U.S. House voted overwhelmingly Thursday to erect high hurdles for Syrian and Iraqi refugees coming to American shores, dividing the president's own party as lawmakers reflected the anxiety of voters back home.

The vote was 289-137, enough to override a threatened White House veto of the legislation, which was

Inside

FBI head: No credible threat to U.S. after Paris attacks. **Page A10**

hurriedly drafted in response to the carnage in the streets of Paris. Forty-seven Democrats voted for the bill, despite President Barack Obama's biting criticism of its proposed limits.

The bill would require new FBI background checks and individual signoffs from three high-ranking U.S. officials before any refugee could come to the U.S. from Iraq or Syria, where the Islamic State group that has claimed credit for the attacks has flourished.

Please see **REFUGEES**, Page A8

Sunny.
High 67, Low 44.
Complete 5-day
forecast, **B10**

Bridge — **B9** Entertainment — **B8, D9** Obituaries — **B4**
Business — **D1** Editorials — **A14** Sports — **C1**
Classifieds — **D2** Local — **A2** Sudoku — **B7**
Comics — **B8-9** Movies — **B7** Television — **B6**

Charleston Deals today

Cantina's
Pay \$10 for \$20.
See **A2**



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Greenville News

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USA TODAY UNITEDHEALTH MAY STOP OFFERING COVERAGE THROUGH EXCHANGES PAGE 1B

Overheated?



BY THE NUMBERS

38.1% The percentage increase in revenue for the five hotels along Main Street, 2012-14.

860 The number of hotel rooms along Main Street now.

1,087 The number of hotel rooms under construction or announced along Main Street.

PHOTOS BY HEIDI HEILBRUNNSTAFF

Construction crews continue to work at the Aloft hotel off of One City Plaza on Wednesday.

Is downtown Greenville getting too many hotels?

RUDOLPH BELL
DBELL@GREENVILLEONLINE.COM

Tara Investments, a Charlotte hotel developer, was pondering where to build its next hotel when executives with the company visited relatives in Greenville and liked what they saw.

They liked Greenville even more after doing some homework on the downtown hotel market and finding it stronger than expected, said Amit Patel, an associate with Tara Investments.

"In many ways, it kind of reminded us of the numbers that we were seeing in downtown Charleston," said Patel, point man for the 130-room Hyatt Place that his company plans to build along Broad Street, two blocks off Main. "Not as strong, but definitely in that range, which really surprised us."

The proposed Hyatt Place is one of eight hotels under construction or planned along Main Street.

Being built now are a 144-room Aloft hotel at the corner of Washington and Richardson streets, a 156-room Embassy Suites at RiverPlace and a 117-room Home 2 Suites at the intersection of North Main and Elford streets.



Construction crews on Wednesday work at the Aloft hotel, one of eight hotels under construction in Greenville.

Developers have also announced plans for a 150-room Homewood Suites next to Fluor Field, a 150-room AC Hotel directly across Main Street from the Peace Center and a Residence Inn and SpringHill Suites with a total of 240 rooms in the same complex at the corner of Washington and Spring streets.

Together, the developments would add 1,087 hotel rooms to the 860 that are along Main Street now — more

See HOTEL, Page 4A

Judge won't toss Easley sinkhole lawsuit

RON BARNETT
RBARNETT@GREENVILLEONLINE.COM

ANDERSON - A federal judge on Thursday denied the city of Easley's motion to dismiss a lawsuit that claims the city has been violating the Clean Water Act for decades in a neighborhood that has been scarred by huge sinkholes.

U.S. District Judge Timothy M. Cain said the city's argument — that the plaintiff failed to put its phone number on its notice of intent to sue — was "an overly technical application of the law" and insufficient to throw out the case.

"The court finds that the notice was reasonably specific enough to give the city opportunity to rectify the problem and avoid a citizen suit," Cain said after hearing arguments from lawyers on both sides.

Sarah Spruill, the attorney representing the city, also raised questions about whether the plaintiff, a homeowner group, had alleged an actual violation of the Clean Water Act.

"It appears that they're complaint is primarily about stormwater, and stormwater in itself is not a violation," she said. "You can't make it stop raining in this subdivision in Easley."

But the judge said that was not the proper venue to take up that issue.

Easley Mayor Larry Bagwell said he hadn't spoken to the city's attorney about Thursday's ruling and wouldn't comment until he had.

The hearing at the federal courthouse in Anderson was the latest in a saga that goes back decades in the Oak Creek neighborhood, which has a string of sinkholes in front yards that resulted from the failure of a drainage system.

The city has begun a \$1 million project to replace the damaged pipes and fix the property damage, but Luc de Gaspe Beaubien, who lives in the neighborhood and is acting as an expert consultant for the plaintiffs, says the repairs aren't sufficient to solve the problems.

The suit asks that the court issue the city civil penalties of at least \$1 million and for the court to "prevent any work on the storm water system that is not fully in compliance with the laws, regulations and standards of the USA."

It claims that silt and pollutants have washed from the neighborhood into Brushy Creek and then to the Saluda River, which is a violation of the

See LAWSUIT, Page 4A

Nearly \$70M in federal flood loans coming to SC

TIAA CREDIT

As of this week, she said, the program



S.C. Mr. Football
Matt Colburn
returns for game
against Clemson, 1B



A behind-the-scenes look at USC's new indoor practice facility, 1B and video on GoGamecocks.com

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TODAY: SUNNY HI 65 LO 39
YESTERDAY: HI 74 LO 64 PRECIP: 0.0 (of 5 p.m.) LST
FORECAST: D.C.

The State

LEXINGTON COUNTY

Farm allegedly employed illegal immigrant workers

BY JOHN MONK
jmonk@thestate.com

Federal officials are scrutinizing a large Lexington County family farm that allegedly employed hundreds of illegal Mexican immigrant workers.

The investigation began in 2013, but no formal charges

Federal officials have known of allegations of illegal aliens at W. P. Rawl since 2013.

Judge Joe Anderson asks what will happen to Rawl, but prosecutor doesn't answer

have been brought against the farm owners, who were identified as Rawl Produce by a federal judge during a court

proceeding this week against two go-betweens accused of hiring the illegal workers for the farm. Specifically, lawyers

said later, the company is W.P. Rawl of Pelion.

"We can neither confirm nor deny the existence or non-existence of an investigation," U.S. Attorney Bill Nettles said Thursday.

Rawl officials did not respond to a request for comment Thursday.

SEE WORKERS, 6A



PREP FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS PAIR OF HOT TEAMS

Richland Northeast and Brookland-Cayce are teams on a roll as they head into football playoff games Friday night, 3B

USC RECRUITING EDWARDS PONDERS OPTIONS

Four-star wide receiver Bryan Edwards from Conway High has decommitted from the Gamecocks and says he'll visit Clemson this weekend, 4B



Journey Ramirez, 13, sits in the minivan, where she and her siblings stayed after their home had mold resulting from October's flood.

THE FLOOD OF 2015: THE AFTERMATH

Six weeks later, some still searching for housing

BY ANVER G. WILKS
awilks@thestate.com

More than six weeks after the historic rains and flooding, Manndy McKenney still has not grown used to homelessness.

McKenney — a 38-year-old Marine Corps and Army veteran, and a single mother to four teenagers — said she "pretty much lost everything" when rain leaked through the wind-damaged roof of her family's house in lower Richland County on Oct. 4.

Her family tried to stay in the mold-infested house in the

weeks after the storm, she said, but sickness and headaches drove them out. Last week, a private inspector deemed the family's home of 10 years "unsalvageable," McKenney said.

McKenney is one of thousands

SEE FLOOD HOUSING, 7A

VIDEO

THESTATE.COM:
Video of Manndy McKenney talking about her family's plight.

MORE INSIDE

Flood cost city of Columbia more than \$700,000 in overtime. 3A



BUSINESS FOOD TRUCK COURT IN WORKS

The West Columbia City Council has given preliminary approval to a plan to open a

Aiken Standard

YOUR LOCAL NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1867

FRIDAY, November 20, 2015

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Hospital bed request denied

Augusta's University Hospital loses bid to Aiken Regional

BY DERREK ASBERRY
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University Hospital in Augusta was denied a Certificate of Need to build a hospital in Aiken after the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control determined that a plan de-

signed by competitor Aiken Regional Medical Centers better met the need for more hospital beds in the area.

The decision hurts the hospital's chances of building in Aiken, but Ed Burr, the senior vice president of the University Health Care System, said the hospital is seeking a review of the

decision and that there are still a number of options available for University.

The Augusta-based company was poised to begin construction of a hospital before the Supreme Court of South Carolina decided to reinstate the certificate of need program in April 2014. The ruling came down af-

ter DHEC suspended its enforcement of the law, but the reinstatement iced University's plans.

University then applied for a Certificate of Need, or CON, to construct a new general acute care hospital with 50 beds at a project cost of about \$32.5 million.

According to DHEC, the CON program was put in place to control health care costs by preventing overbuilding of health care facilities and services in one area.

An Oct. 19 letter written by DHEC

Please see BED, Page 14A

INSIDE TODAY



Aiken couple invites public to bonsai garden
Living on the Go, 1C



Aiken's Kevin Kisner in lead at Sea Island
Sports, 1B

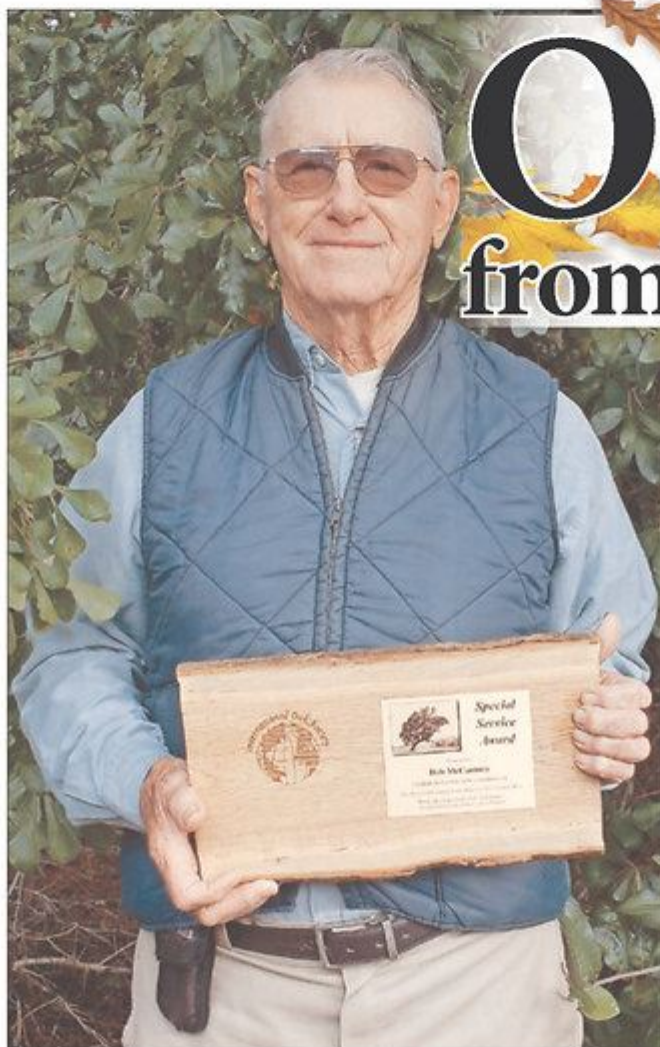


Help shelter pets have a home for the holidays
Local News, 5A

AREA DEATHS

Anthony O. Gardner, Orangeburg
Curtis Green, Allendale
Elizabeth G. Anderson, Bath
Gail Walker Engledow, Aiken
Gloria L. Kitchings, Columbia
Jean Marie Branson, Aiken
Mattie Hall Kinney, Aiken
Wilbur Lewis Garrick, Aiken
William H. "Bill" Murphy, Aiken
Deaths and Funerals, 6A

WEATHER



Bob McCartney, president of Woodlanders Inc., recently received a Special Service Award from the International Oak Society, however, he says the award also honors Aiken.

Oaks

from all over

Resident's recognition an honor for all of Aiken

BY DEDE BILES
dbiles@aikenstandard.com

The Special Service Award from the International Oak Society has Bob McCartney's name on it, but he believes it is also an honor that recognizes Aiken.

"I have worked with city managers all the way back to Roland Windham, and I have always received good cooperation and support from them," McCartney said.

McCartney, 79, is the president of Woodlanders Inc., a nursery that specializes in rare native and exotic perennials. For more than 30 years, he has been planting trees and shrubs in numerous locations throughout Aiken.

"The nursery has basically donated them, and I have taken care of them after I planted them until they were well established," he said.

Many of the trees given by Woodlanders to the City of Aiken are oaks.

"Aiken has the most diverse collection of oaks in



Please see TREE, Page 9A

Aiken couple recalls day after Paris attacks

BY BILL BENGTON
bbengton@aikenstandard.com

Aiken residents Mike and Donna Cunniff got a first-hand look at Paris during the week of the most recent terrorist attacks, having been visiting the French capital Nov. 10 through 17.

The retirees, who moved to Aiken from Ohio in 2008, were staying in the Montparnasse, on the river Seine's left bank, near Paris' only

the fact, despite being fairly close to some of the sites of bloodshed.

"It happened Friday night, and the only thing I remember was hearing a lot of extra police sirens," Donna recalled. "You hear police sirens off and on, because it's a big city. We were in our hotel room."

This was at least couple's fifth or sixth trip to France and fourth or fifth visit to Paris, by Donna's estimation. She recalled plenty of friendly contact with Parisians over the years



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50 CENTS

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North Hartsville Principal Kristi Austin and Assistant Principal Tony Thomas, receive a portrait of George Washington from members of the Hartsville Masonic Lodge #173 Sid Crouch, Wayne Watford, Jason Crowley, Oliver Segars, Eric Calhoun, Ricky Talbert and Tony Calhoun.

Masons present North Hartsville Elementary School with portrait of George Washington

BY ARDIE ARVIDSON
aarvidson@hartsvillemessenger.com

Hartsville Masonic Lodge #173 AFM presented North Hartsville Elementary School with a portrait of President George Washington to hang in the school.

The lodge purchased the portrait from the Grand Lodge of South Carolina as part of a fundraiser for juvenile diabetes.

Washington's portrait was chosen

because he was also a Freemason, said Worshipful Master Eric Calhoun during the presentation. He said Washington was a founding member of the Masonic Lodge in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

While they hope to make presentations to other schools in the future, North Hartsville was chosen as their first school to present Washington's portrait to because a member attended the school and his daughter now attends North Hartsville.

North Hartsville Principal Kristi

Austin said the portrait will hang in the cafeteria building where all students will be able to see it.

"We want it to be in a place of honor so everyone can see it," she said. "We felt honored that we were the first school chosen to receive a portrait. We are hoping teachers will talk about it and that it will spark an interest by student who will want to do research (on George Washington). It is also benefiting a charitable, which is a bonus."

Video wins award

'After 180 Days: Hartsville' delves into success of PULSE program

From staff reports

A video produced by the TEACH Foundation earned an Award of Excellence from the South Carolina Chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators. "After 180 Days: Hartsville, A Community Perspective" was evaluated by independent judges from Nashville, Tennessee; Atlanta, Georgia; and St. Louis, Missouri.

The entry consisted of two parts: a work plan outlining the objectives and results of the project and supporting documentation illustrating the outcome. The work plan focuses on storytelling, and explains how Hartsville schools became the subject of a year-long video project managed by the National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC). The project, called "180 Days: Hartsville" was a two-hour documentary and part of the PBS public media initiative "American Graduate: Let's Make It Happen." Co-produced by South Carolina ETV (SCETV) and NBPC, it aired in March.

The documentary primarily focused on a fifth-grader struggling with behavioral issues throughout the 2013-14 school year. Interspersed throughout the film, viewers could catch glimpses of key

See PULSE, Page 5A



Katie Liddle and her son, Bose Liddle, stand before the Wall of Honor at Carolina Elementary School recently. Katie Liddle organized the project, which displayed the names of past and current members of the United States Armed Forces and included their times served, ranks, deployments and awards.

Carolina Elementary pays tribute to veterans

From staff reports

Carolina Elementary School paid respect to American veterans recently, honoring approximately 300 members of the military with a "Wall of Honor."

The school unveiled the memorial, featuring the names of friends and family members who served, as a way to recognize Veterans Day.

The Wall of Honor prominently displayed the names on handmade stars in the school's cafeteria/multi-purpose room. The stars recognized American veterans of wars dating back to the 1800s.

Carolina Elementary Principal Donna Barrett credited Katie Liddle with the idea for the wall.

Liddle is a parent of two Carolina Elementary students: Bose Liddle and Mac Liddle. She is also married to Lt. Col. Jimmy Liddle, who is stationed at Shaw Air Force Base in Sumter. The Liddle family's connection to the armed forces prompted Barrett to seek their advice for the event.

"I have seen starshung in schools in the



Dr. Mary Thomas pins a new star on the Wall of Honor recently at Carolina Elementary.

With help from school counselor Dr. Mary Thomas and school resource officer Chris Taylor, the plan became a success. The school also held Grandparents Day at the same time, and swarms of stu-

educational endeavor for Carolina Elementary families. "We were looking for a way to honor our veterans and military personnel, and we wanted to do something that would



PEAKE READY FOR FINALE AT DEATH VALLEY

SPORTS, B1



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD UNDERWAY

UPSTATE, C1

Herald-Journal

SPARTANBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA

Friday, November 20, 2015



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TODAY SAT SUN



59°/36° 54°/38° 50°/24°

Complete forecast, B8

PARIS ATTACKS THE AFTERMATH

"We have strong reason to believe that this cell was about to commit massive terror attacks in France"

— Prime Minister Manuel Valls

FAR FROM OVER

WHILE PARIS ATTACK MASTERMIND IS CONFIRMED DEAD, REFUGEE FEARS PROMPT US CONGRESS TO TAKE ACTION



Flowers and candle tributes are placed at the Restaurant Le Carillon Thursday in Paris. The Belgian jihadi suspected of masterminding deadly attacks in Paris died during a police raid on a suburban apartment building, the city prosecutor's office announced Thursday, with France still reeling from last Friday's attacks that killed 129 people and wounded hundreds of others. FRANK AUGSTEIN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UPSTATE

Federal investigation sought in SMC case

The National Action Network is calling on the U.S. Justice Department to investigate the officer-involved shooting death of a Limestone College student on the campus of Spartanburg Methodist College Nov. 9. C1

BUSINESS



Corporate profits dip

Corporate America has a profit problem. U.S. company earnings are falling for the first time since 2009, when the economy was still reeling from the Great Recession. The main culprit is the plunging price of oil. C4



Insurer questions role in exchanges

UnitedHealth chopped its 2015 earnings forecast and the nation's largest health insurer has begun to question its future in public insurance exchanges, a key component in the nation's health care overhaul. C5

FAITH & FAMILY



Discarded cell phone led to cell ringleader

By Lori Hinnant and Karl Ritter
The Associated Press

PARIS — French investigators tracked down the alleged ringleader of last week's Paris bloodshed after receiving a startling tipoff: The Islamic militant wasn't in Syria but in Europe, plotting yet another attack. A discarded cellphone found near a bloodied concert hall led them to

Ringleader's death is confirmed

The Paris prosecutor's office confirmed that Abdelhamid Abaaoud, who is suspected of masterminding last week's attacks, died in Wednesday's raid.

WEDNESDAY, November 18

Two were killed in the raid in Saint-Denis.



ABDELHAMID ABAAOUD

27

Belgium native is said to be the mastermind.



HASNA AITBOULAHSEN

She is identified as Abaaoud's cousin.



Identity not given

Eight were arrested in the raid.

Status unclear

Officials were seeking two other fugitives earlier in the week. Their status is unclear.



SALAH ABDESALAM

26

Brother of Ibrahim is potentially involved.



Identity not given

FRIDAY, November 13



14 YEARS IN FRANCE

Identity not given



Identity not given



Identity not given

Seven of the Paris attackers died.



16 YEARS IN FRANCE

Identity not given



Identity not given

House votes to curb Syrian refugees, snubbing veto threat

By Erica Werner
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Responding swiftly to the terror in Paris, the U.S. House voted overwhelmingly Thursday to erect high hurdles for Syrian and Iraqi refugees coming to American shores, dividing the president's own party as lawmakers reflected the anxiety of voters back home.

The vote was 289-137, enough to override a threatened White House veto



Morning News

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 20, 2015

TODAY'S WEATHER

Mostly sunny, cooler and less humid.
High 66, low 37.
DETAILS 2A

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Darlington elects Hines mayor

Chooses three council members

JOSHUA LLOYD
Morning News
jlloyd@florencenews.com

DARLINGTON — After two rounds of voting, a tie in the runoff election and two mandatory recounts, City Councilwoman Gloria Hines was chosen

as Darlington's new mayor Thursday.

She held 10 more votes than her opponent, former County Councilman and longtime City Fire Chief Jim Stone.

Tuesday's unofficial results showed an 814-vote split for each candidate throughout the

city's six precincts, but after the Darlington County Election Commission verifications Thursday morning, Hines gained 14 contested ballot votes, while Stone gained only four.



Hines

A recount Thursday afternoon

showed no change in those results and solidified Hines as Darlington's next mayor.

"I knew people would get out and vote this time because people want to change Darlington," Hines said. "I want to thank God first and all of the people who voted for me on Tuesday. Jim Stone did a great job, my team did great and we came out on

top, and now we can move forward."

She said her first action as mayor will be to meet with city officials and complete any tasks that current Mayor Tony Watkins may leave unfinished in January, then move on to establishing a new team and tackling

See **HINES**, Page 3A

Graduation rates on the rise in SC, Florence

BY MELISSA ROLLINS
Morning News
mrollins@florencenews.com

FLORENCE — Graduation rates have risen across South Carolina, according to the 2014-15 state report cards released Wednesday by the S.C. Department of Education. Last year, the rate was 80.1 percent; for 2014-15, that rate went up slightly to 80.3 percent.

Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman said she was happy to see the graduation rate rising across South Carolina.

"We are going to continue boosting academic achievement and encouraging our students to excel," Spearman said. "I am proud of how far we've come, and I want to commend our students, parents and teachers for their success."

Four districts in Florence County also saw a rise in their graduation rates: Florence School District 1 and Florence School District 5 saw rates higher than the state average. Florence 1's rate rose from 80.1 to 81.6 percent, while Florence 5's went from 83.3 to 87.4 percent.

In Timmonsville, Florence 4's graduation rate dropped from 71.4 to 69.5 percent.

For the 2015 and 2016 school years, absolute ratings and growth ratings will not be provided. A new system will be in place for the 2016-17 school year that will provide similar accountability information, according to legislation that is expected to be completed next year.

Florence 3 Superintendent Laura Hickson said the new report card shows that her district has made

See **GRADUATE**, Page 3A

HARTSVILLE HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE



The Carillon Carolers, a Victorian cappella caroling quartet, sing to a crowd during Hartsville's Downtown Holiday Open House on Thursday.



People wander the downtown sidewalks of Hartsville during the Hartsville Downtown Open House on Thursday evening.

Downtown Hartsville was busy Thursday night with people in the Christmas mood. Businesses extended their hours and special Christmas events took place for the Hartsville Downtown Holiday Open House. Children had their photo taken with Santa and were read a story by Mrs. Claus. Free carriage rides took guests around the block, and carolers wandered downtown and sang to people passing by.

Mark Walberg in town for fundraiser

BY DEBORAH SWEARINGEN
Morning News
dsweARINGEN@florencenews.com

FLORENCE — Mark Walberg is back in town.

The "Antiques Roadshow" host, who hails from Florence, will be hosting "An Evening of Mercy," the second annual Mer-



Florence County

Council OKs \$2.8 million bid for new fire station

JOSHUA LLOYD
Morning News
jlloyd@florencenews.com

FLORENCE — The Florence County Council on Thursday

likely begin in 30 to 45 days and is projected to be finished in late 2016.

Howe Springs Fire Chief William Dillon said the current main station is too small for the

SPORTS: Greenwood Christian playing for it all, **1B**

INDEX-JOURNAL

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2 SECTIONS, 20 PAGES

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2015

DAILY 75¢, SUNDAY \$1.50

Online

■ Full report cards for each district and individual schools in the district can be found at <http://ed.sc.gov/data/report-cards/state-report-cards/2015>.

State issues school report cards

Lakelands districts react to mix of test scores

By **ARIEL GILREATH**
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School district and individual school report cards were released by the Department of Educa-

tion Wednesday morning. Those report cards contain average test scores and information from superintendents about their districts.

This year, the report cards

do not contain ratings for each district like in previous years because Act 200 suspends the Education Oversight Committee from making ratings from the report cards for two years.

A press release sent out by the Department of Education said new report cards will be released in fall of 2017 under a new

See **REPORT**, page 3A



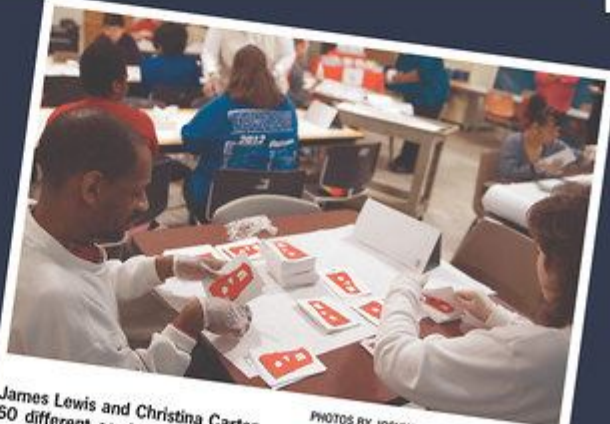
DARRELL JOHNSON



FAY SPROUSE



Brian Grier, left, and Louise Robinson, Burton Center Greenwood day program director, tie a ribbon on a box of cards.



James Lewis and Christina Carter sort cards into separate stacks. About 60 different card designs were submitted for consideration by Burton Center consumers.

PHOTOS BY JOSHUA S. KELLY / INDEX-JOURNAL

Homemade Christmas cheer

Burton Center consumers make, send holiday cards

By **MARY KATE MCGOWAN**
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For about an hour a day, 13 people at the Burton Center for Disabilities and Special Needs in Greenwood make Christmas magic.

The nonprofit that serves more

than 1,000 people with disabilities and special needs in Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Lexington, McCormick and Saluda counties is launching its first ever Christmas card venture this season.

See **CHEER**, page 4A



Charges from crime spree leads to 20-year sentence



The Beaufort Gazette

FRIDAY, November 20, 2015

beaufortgazette.com

Established in 1897 75 cents

Mold closes county building

Beaufort County Public Defender's Office and the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Department are affected.

By ERIN HEFFERNAN
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An outbreak of mold in a Beaufort County office building on Duke Street in Beaufort has left a group of county workers without an office.

County workers noticed the patches of black grit on one wall behind pictures and bookcases in the county Public Defender's Office, which is located in the county's Human Resources building on Nov. 12. They alerted county leaders, said Gene Hood, public defender for the 14th Circuit Court.

In response, employees in the defender's office and the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Department next door were told to work from home or at the county courthouse while the county attempts to identify the dark mold growth.

The county plans to hire a mold inspection specialist to identify the type of mold and find the source of the moisture that is causing its spread, said Deputy County Administrator Josh Gruber on Thursday.

It is still unknown if the mold has caused any health problems in county staff members.

"For now, it seems the mold is more of an issue of comfort than anything else," Gruber said. "It can produce foul odors and affect the air, so people were sent out of the office out of caution."

While no state or federal laws regulate how local governments should deal with mold problems, Gruber said the county will follow recommendations by the Centers

Please see MOLD on 8A

OTHER PROPOSED STORES

- Lowe's
- Target
- Kohl's
- Marshalls
- Dick's Sporting Goods
- Field & Stream

RESIDENTS REACT



JACK HILLS

"My daughter uses Costco all the time in Charleston. I have not been there myself, but based off of what she has told me, I'll love very much having one locally."



KAREN ROEHL

"I think Costco is fabulous. We've been members of Costco for years, and we've had to go all the way up to Charleston."



STEVE RYDEN

"I'm excited. We've been hearing for seven years, 'Wouldn't it be nice,' and, 'Yes, we are going to get one,' but it never shows up. Been looking forward to those larger stores."

MORE ONLINE

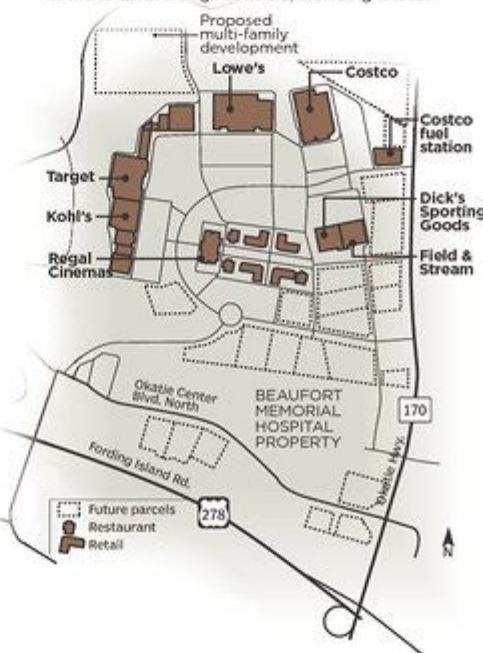
For video, click on this story at beaufortgazette.com.

Costco plans revealed

Retailer among proposed tenants in shopping center at intersection of S.C. 170 and U.S. 278

PROPOSED SITE PLAN

The large, undeveloped plot of land at the northwest intersection of U.S. 278 and S.C. 170 may soon be home to several large retailers, including Costco.



ASHLEY FAHEY

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A long-awaited day for many Lowcountry shoppers could finally be in sight.

A site plan for Okatie Crossing, a 280-acre development at the intersection of S.C. 170 and U.S. 278, reveals several tenants proposed for the center, including warehouse retailer Costco. Other proposed stores include Lowe's, Target, Kohl's, Marshalls, Dick's Sporting Goods and Field & Stream.

In addition to retailers, the site plan shows a Regal Cinemas movie theater proposed for the center of the massive development.

Please see COSTCO on 8A



DELAYNA EARLEY • Staff photos

A sign advertising for the open locations that will be available once Okatie Crossing is completed sits at the future location of the shopping complex on Thursday afternoon near where the U.S. 278 entrance will be.

Brian Symmes

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