

Title: **S.C., county voters turn out for election**
 Author: BY MAX HREND A mhrenda@southstrandnews.com
 Size: 105.55 column inches
 Georgetown, SC Circulation: 8446



S.C., county voters turn out for election

BY MAX HREND A

mhrenda@southstrandnews.com

Despite a contentious national election that would usher in a new president, Georgetown County saw a slight dip in voter turnout from the last presidential election in 2012.

Out of 42,782 registered voters, 31,911 opted to participate in the general election Tuesday, Nov. 4, for a turnout of more than 74 percent.

In 2012, however, when President Barack Obama was facing Mitt Romney, 31,273 of 41,094 — more than 76 percent — turned out to vote.

Despite the lower turnout rate, Georgetown County turned out well

above the national rate of 56 percent, which was reported by Business Insider. South Carolina, as a whole, turned out above the national average, too, at 67.08 percent, with 2,099,349 ballots cast out of 3,129,467 registered voters.

As many had projected, the majority of those votes went the way of the Republican party. In the race for the presidency, Republican billionaire Donald Trump earned the most votes with 1,141,639 to claim the state's nine electoral votes. Democrat Hillary Clinton, a former first lady, senator and secretary of state, finished

second with 846,166 total votes; the various third-party and independent candidates combined to receive 91,220 total votes.

Georgetown County's results in the presidential race mirrored those of South Carolina. Trump won the county with 17,334 votes (55 percent), while Clinton earned 13,234 votes (41.99 percent) and the other candidates finished with 951 total votes. By contrast, in 2012, Romney won Georgetown County with 16,526 votes

Please see **VOTERS**, Page 9A

Voters

from 1A

(53.37 percent), while Obama finished second with 14,163 (45.74 percent).

Georgetown County GOP Chairman Randy Hollister said he expected a strong Republican showing in Georgetown County. He added, however, he wasn't so sure about how the national election would play out.

"I was, frankly, clueless as to how the presidential race was going to go," Hollister said. "... But it's better than I thought it would be, so that's pretty good. I think it's a great day for America."

Republicans also retained control of both houses of Congress, with voters in South Carolina doing their part to help out. U.S. Sen. Tim Scott was elected to serve his first full term — Gov. Nikki Haley appointed him to succeed Jim DeMint, who resigned his seat on Jan. 1, 2013 — after more than 60 percent (1,232,777) of voters gave him their support. Scott also garnered more than 60 percent of the vote in Georgetown County by receiving 18,678 of 30,916 total votes.

County: Georgetown

Georgetown County also mirrored districtwide results in the race for the District 7 seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Incumbent U.S. Rep. Tom Rice was re-elected to his third term after he, too, received more than 60 percent (170,826) of the vote throughout the district; in Georgetown County, Rice carried the vote with 58.94 percent (18,138) of the vote. Despite running as a candidate for three different parties — Democratic, Green and Working Families — challenger Mal Hyman earned 110,378 (about 39 percent) of the districtwide vote; Hyman earned more than 41 percent (12,623) of the Georgetown County vote.

With regard to representation in the state Legislature, Democrats and Republicans split the county's four seats. Carl Anderson, D-103, and Lee Hewitt, R-108, will represent Georgetown County in the state House, while Stephen Goldfinch, R-34, and Ronnie Sabb, D-32, will do so in the state Senate. None of them faced opposition in the general election.

Several county office-holders also faced no opposition in their bids for re-election. Democrat Alma White was re-elected to serve as clerk of court, while Republicans Brian Shult and Kenny Johnson won re-election in their respective bids for auditor and coroner. Additionally, Republican Leigh Powers Boan faced no opposition in her successful bid for probate court judge.

Unlike those offices, however, both the sheriff's office and the county treasurer's seat were contested elections. Republican Sheriff A. Lane Cribb was elected to his seventh term after earning 59 percent (18,253) of the vote. Democrat Darryel Carr finished second with 11,956 (38.65 percent) while independent Birt Adams trailed with 710 (2.29 percent).

"I'm very thankful for the people who voted for me," Cribb said. "We're going to continue to do what we've been doing."

In the race for county treasurer, Republican Allison Sippel Peteet won the seat with 17,510 votes (57.27 percent), ahead of Democratic challenger Chelice

Cox Waites, who earned 13,053 total votes (42.69 percent). This will be Peteet's first term as county treasurer, as she will replace outgoing Treasurer Loretta Washington-Cooper, who is retiring at the end of her term.

"I'm very excited about it," Peteet said. "I want to thank all my supporters and the Republican party. They were a big influence in my win."

Aside from White, Democrats notched another victory in a race for County Council. Democrat Everett Carolina Sr. defeated independent Eileen Sullivan Johnson 2,318-718 to command more than 76 percent of the vote in his bid for the District 3 seat on Georgetown County Council.

"I appreciate the turnout from the voters in District 3, and their

acceptance ... and support of me and my platform," Carolina said. "I'm ready to work for District 3, and for Georgetown County,

Title: **S.C., county voters turn out for election**
 Author: BY MAX HRENDIA mhrenda@southstrandnews.com
 Size: 105.55 column inches
 Georgetown, SC Circulation: 8446

as well. I look forward to working with the administrator and the rest of County Council to make Georgetown a better place.”

Carolina will replace outgoing Councilwoman Leona Myers Miller, whom he defeated in the June 28 primary runoff, to begin his first term in office. Though he also serves on the county’s Planning Commission, County Public Information Officer Jackie Broach said Carolina will be required to relinquish that seat before beginning his work on council.

Along with Carolina, incumbents Ron Charlton, R-2, Lillie Jean Johnson, D-4, and Austin Beard, R-5, will return to County Council after facing no opposition in their re-election bids.

In the races for five open, non-partisan seats on the Georgetown County School District Board of Education, four incumbents won their bids for re-election, along with a new face, as well. Randy Walker received more than 56 percent of the vote (1,446) in his successful bid for the District 4 school board seat, which opened after sitting member Zelma Carr announced her retirement earlier

this year.

“I’m numb, stunned (and) excited but, most of all, humbled,” Walker said, in an interview with Times staff Tuesday night.

“I’d like to thank Ms. Carr, who endorsed me, and my family and all the people of Georgetown County who trusted my experience. That’s what’s most humbling about it.”

Walker beat out challengers Rhonda Green (968 votes) and Clare Ann Reigart (162 votes) to win the seat.

In addition to Walker, Sandra Johnson won a contested bid to retain her seat as the board’s District 3 representative. Johnson won more than 46 percent of the vote (886), ahead of challengers Johnny Altman (661) and Gene Footman (367). Johnson thanked her supporters, but also invited those who did not support her to contact her with any concerns.

“I thank the voters from District 3 for returning me to the seat,” Johnson said. “I hope the large number of people who did not vote for me will understand I represent them as well, and I can be contacted if they have any concerns or questions

about the district and its policies.”

Incumbent board members Sarah Floyd Elliott (District 1), Elery Little (District 5) and Richard Kerr (District 6) were also re-elected after facing no opposition.

Another familiar face will return to another county non-partisan board. Mark Johnson brought home more than 57 percent (9,441 votes) to retain his seat on the county’s Soil and Water District Commission. Johnson finished well ahead of challengers Truitt Owens (3,642 votes) and Jack Whetstone (3,208 votes), neither of whom exceeded 23 percent of the total vote.

“I’m overwhelmed by the support and very appreciative,” Johnson said. “I didn’t expect to get those kinds of votes in the little old Soil and Water non-partisan race. I’m very pleased that the friends and family I have after 30 years in Georgetown think that much of me.”

Along with voting in the aforementioned candidates, voters also approved, by a 57-percent margin, a referendum permitting the school district to issue \$165 million in

bond money to cover the cost of district-wide construction projects — without using a tax increase. The money is slated to be used to pay for additions onto schools’ gymnasiums, the county’s Advanced Manufacturing Center and the addition of tennis courts. Additionally, the money will also go toward numerous repairs to all of the district’s schools and buildings, which Superintendent Dr. Randy Dozier described as “very essential.”

“You’re talking about roofs that are 20 years old, and 20-year-old HVAC systems,” Dozier said. “They’re reaching the end of their lifespan and they’re beginning to fail.”

In addition to repairing and expanding on the county’s schools, Dozier said the referendum may also serve to benefit the local economy by contracting out the construction and repair work to local firms.

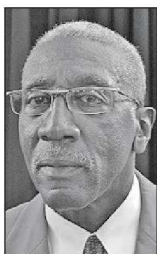
“There are a lot of ways people can benefit from this,” he said. “I really thank the people for their support and direction through this process. ... We’re going to spend this money wisely and be good guardians of the taxpayers’ dollars.”

Title: **S.C., county voters turn out for election**
 Author: BY MAX HRENDIA mhrenda@southstrandnews.com
 Size: 105.55 column inches
 Georgetown, SC Circulation: 8446



CHRIS SOKOLOSKI/SOUTH STRAND NEWS

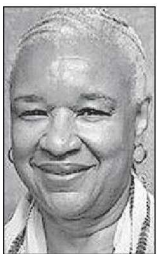
To the left, voters cast their ballots while, right, more wait in line to cast their votes on Election Day morning at Georgetown County Family YMCA, 529 Browns Ferry Road.



Carolina



Cribb



Johnson

Title: **S.C., county voters turn out for election**
Author: BY MAX HRENDIA mhrenda@southstrandnews.com
Size: 105.55 column inches
Georgetown, SC Circulation: 8446

**Peteet****Walker**

Title: **Global spotlight**
 Author: BY EILEEN KEITHLY ekiethly@southstrandnews.com
 Size: 189.41 column inches
 Georgetown, SC Circulation: 8446



Global spotlight

BBC documentary to highlight Plantersville sewer tax woes

BY EILEEN KEITHLY
 ekiethly@southstrandnews.com

What started out as a local story in the Georgetown Times, about a group of Plantersville residents claiming that a yearly sewer tax assessment has unfairly led to homes and property being seized in public auctions, has gone international after the British Broadcasting Co. arrived in Georgetown earlier this week.

The arrival of the BBC may bring global awareness to a decade-long issue that many residents of the Jackson Village community say is robbing them of their homes and their heritage.

Veteran BBC broadcast journalist Brian Wheeler, along with BBC video journalist Anna Bressanin, arrived in Georgetown Wednesday, Oct. 26, to begin filming a documentary film and radio production, which was first spotlighted in a Georgetown Times' ongoing investigative series, originally titled "A Community in Crisis."

"Four years ago I did a story in Birmingham, Alabama, about a com-

munity that had been cut off from their water service," Wheeler told the Times. After he read the Plantersville story on the Georgetown Times' website, www.southstrandnews.com, he said he thought the story deserved a wider audience.

"I... thought to myself that this was something that was going on that needed some publicity," Wheeler said.

The Georgetown Times investigation revealed that since sewer service was completed in the Jackson Village area of the Plantersville community in 2014, problems have arisen, including charges of racism and annual assessments, that some residents say they never asked for and can't afford.

In July, some Jackson Village residents gathered on the steps of the state Capitol to protest what many called a "racist" and "illegal" sewer tax assessment.

"We came here to bring awareness to our state lawmakers about the sewer tax that was unfairly and unjustly imposed on the people of

Please see **BBC**, Page 2A

Title: **Global spotlight**
 Author: BY EILEEN KEITHLY ekiethly@southstrandnews.com
 Size: 189.41 column inches
 Georgetown, SC Circulation: 8446

BBC film to document sewer tax woes

from 1A

Jackson Village," said the Rev. Benjamin Grate, the group's organizer at the Columbia event. After the protest, Grate met with Hal Peters, Gov. Nikki Haley's policy analyst.

"I thought we were going to make some progress after I met with Mr. Peters at the state house in Columbia," Grate said during an interview with the BBC Wednesday, "but I am so happy to see these folks from the BBC here ... I think our story is going to finally be told and our South Carolina politicians won't be able to continue to turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to the people in Jackson Village."

In addition to the the sewer tax situation, Wheeler said he also found himself wanting to know more about the possible eradication of the Gullah Geeche culture that thrives within the Jackson Village community.

"I knew nothing about the Gullah Geeche culture," he said. "I did a bit of research, and I thought that this is something that is going on that no one knows about."

During a second day of shooting on Thursday, Wheeler said he found many of the residents "shy" but warm and willing to talk about their plight to rid themselves of a "crippling" sewer tax — and the possible extinction of a culture that, many told Wheeler, "they were taught to honor by their ancestors."

"I was quite keen on understanding and learning more about the Gullah Geeche cul-

ture," Wheeler said, "but it's heart breaking, actually, to listen to the residents speak about the possibility of losing their homes, and not being able to pass their land and their culture down to their grandchildren."

Having never visited South Carolina, Wheeler said he and Brassanin had no idea what the lay of the land would be, or the living conditions they would find in Jackson Village.

"You just don't know do you? When you are setting off to cover a story, what you will find," Wheeler said. "But we were really amazed at the sense of pride and ownership that is so obvious within Jackson Village. ...

"Just driving around, it's nice to see just how tidy, neat and well-kept the homes and properties are."

It was that sense of pride in ownership and the willingness of a community to fight for what they feel is rightfully theirs, Wheeler said, that made such an impact on him when he spotted the palatial plantation homes that line the river, just around the corner from Jackson Village.

"I thought I had prepared myself for the stark difference between the two," Wheeler said, "but to see it in the flesh, really brings it home to what they are up against, and it's really quite compelling, isn't it?"

Wheeler said the real-estate signs in and around Jackson Village gave him a sense that the community was "under siege."

"The residents conveyed a sincere fear to us that the sewer tax was enabling the plantation

owners and the timber companies to acquire their land and homes," Wheeler said. "When you are here, you really get a sense that the residents in Jack-

son Village are surrounded by the forces of development and they don't seem to have a lot that they can fight back with really."

On assignment from the United Kingdom, Wheeler is temporarily stationed at the BBC's Washington bureau for six months, while he films documentary features on American life.

"My day job back in the United Kingdom is hosting radio and online forums for news and politics," Wheeler said. "I'm here in the U.S. until March."

Brassanin, a seasoned video journalist, is stationed at the BBC's New York bureau.

"I normally do short documentaries, but my first movie came out six months ago," Brassanin said. "I'm very pleased to be able to film the video portion of Brian's story for him and we have gotten some amazing footage while we were here."

Wheeler said he will complete the remainder of his interviews by phone from Washington, and the release date for the film will be sometime in mid-November.

"This will get a wide variety of air time," Wheeler said. "We will run it on our news show, put it on the website and there will also be a radio spot, as well. ...

"As I'm sure you are aware, our stories air around the world."

Wheeler said the Plantersville documentary will air on BBC World News America; the or-

ganization's nightly news hour, and a text story, along with the documentary film will also air

on the BBC's website. The story will also be broadcast on World Service Radio.

Title: **Global spotlight**
Author: BY EILEEN KEITHLY ekiethly@southstrandnews.com
Size: 189.41 column inches
Georgetown, SC Circulation: 8446



EILEEN KEITHLY/SOUTH STRAND NEWS

Jackson Village resident Luther Windley, right, shows BBC video journalist Anna Bressanin the pump house that supplies water to his house.

Title: **Global spotlight**
Author: BY EILEEN KEITHLY ekiethly@southstrandnews.com
Size: 189.41 column inches
Georgetown, SC Circulation: 8446



EILEEN KEITHLY/SOUTH STRAND NEWS

BBC journalist Brian Wheeler, left, interviews Plantersville resident Dody Carl Tucker Jr., right, while the Rev. Ben Grate looks on.

Title: **Global spotlight**
Author: BY EILEEN KEITHLY ekiethly@southstrandnews.com
Size: 189.41 column inches
Georgetown, SC Circulation: 8446



James Elder, left, and the Rev. Benjamin Grate are interviewed by Brian Wheeler and filmed by Anna Bressanin, both with the BBC.



PHOTOS BY EILEEN KEITHLY/SOUTH STRAND NEWS

BBC video journalist Anna Bressanin, left, places a microphone on Jackson Village resident Gloria Milton.

Title: **Global spotlight**
Author: BY EILEEN KEITHLY ekiethly@southstrandnews.com
Size: 189.41 column inches
Georgetown, SC Circulation: 8446



Lillian Milton, right, tells Brian Wheeler how her house was sold at public auction after she didn't pay a yearly sewer tax assessment.