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SC Front Pages – Mon day, October 3, 2016

The Post and Courier

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Monday, October 3, 2016

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Charleston, S.C. \$1.00

Dorchester referendum faces challenge

Court likely will find that parks, libraries shouldn't be on same ballot issue, AG's office says

BY BRENDA RINDGE
brindge@postandcourier.com

A conservative Dorchester County group is trying to stop a Nov. 8 referendum asking voters if they want to raise taxes for new parks and libraries.

After receiving an opinion Friday from the state Attorney General's Office that said combining parks and libraries in the same ballot question

could be illegal, the Dorchester County Taxpayers Association plans to ask County Council on Monday to cancel the vote.

"We believe a court will likely determine neither the Constitution nor the General Assembly intended to give a county council the authority to combine multiple separate issues for bond issuance into one referendum question," Assistant Attorney General Anita Fair wrote in a Sept. 30 opinion. A bond question for a county library

is governed by a separate statute than one for a park, according to the opinion, which cites cases dating as far back as 1908.

Attorney general's opinions don't carry the weight of law, but they are based on an interpretation of the law.

Council Chairman David Chinnis, who had not seen the opinion Friday, said council sought advice from both county attorney John Frampton and bond attorneys Haynsworth Sinkler

Boyd on the referendum wording.

"It is a single issue," he said. "It relates to a quality of life issue in Dorchester County. That's the way we've approached this from the get-go. I don't have any clue if it will pass or fail, but I believe that allowing the people of Dorchester County to make that decision is pretty important."

Please see REFERENDUM, Page A4

S.C. keeps an eye on Hurricane Matthew

BY ANGIE JACKSON
ajackson@postandcourier.com

Lowcountry emergency management officials have started precautionary preparations for Hurricane Matthew as the powerful storm's potential impact on the East Coast remained uncertain Sunday.

Matthew is churning toward Haiti and Jamaica, where heavy rainfall has the potential to produce life-threatening flash floods and mudslides, the National Hurricane Center reported. By Sunday night, the Category 4 storm was centered about 255 miles south-southeast of Kingston, Jamaica. An Air Force Reserve Hurricane Hunter aircraft crew reported the hurricane is packing maximum sustained winds near 145 mph with higher gusts, a decrease from 150 mph winds clocked earlier Sunday.

How the hurricane may affect the U.S. later in the week remains unclear. It's too soon to rule out the possibility of Matthew posing a threat to the Florida coast, according to the hurricane center.

Charleston County's Emergency Management Department is monitoring the storm's potential path and on Sunday announced a move to Operating Condition 4, the next highest response level above normal, day-to-day operations. Emergency operations staff is ready to respond should the hurricane impact South Carolina's coast. The Emergency Operations Center has not been activated.

"While the path of Hurricane Matthew remains uncertain, citizens should take the time to review emergency plans and check supplies," the county said in a release.

S.C. Emergency Management Division Director Kim Stenson advised coastal residents to familiarize themselves with hurricane evacuation routes.

Please see HURRICANE, Page A4

Inside



SPORTS

Biggest win in 35 years sends Ryder Cup back to U.S. C1

SPORTS

Falcons set team records as Panthers continue slide. C1

LOCAL

'Slave baby' drawing prompts community forum. A3

Fixing the mess

Project to relieve 'deplorable' I-526 traffic, improve interchanges a state priority, but it will take time



Morning commuters make their way through the I-526 and I-26 interchange Wednesday, which likely will improve in coming years as the state Department of Transportation completes a series of projects in the area.

BY DIANE KNICH
dknich@postandcourier.com

One of South Carolina's busiest interchanges — where Interstates 26 and 526 meet — is dangerous, especially for trucks. But help is on the way.

The intersection's entry points are cloverleafs instead of the long, sweeping ramps and overpasses of newer interchanges. And the cloverleafs get narrower near where they merge with fast-moving traffic. And that poses a problem, said Patrick Barber, president of Superior Transportation and a board member with the South Carolina Truckers Association.

"You have to slow down when you should be accelerating," he said. That leads to problems. "Most trucks that overturn do so at the top of a cloverleaf."

Please see I-526, Page A4

Online

For more information on the project, go to www.526lowcountrycorridor.org.

Relief in sight for congested I-526

The state Department of Transportation is beginning a years-long process of widening Interstate 526 and improving interchanges between Paul Cantrell Boulevard in West Ashley and Rivers Avenue in North Charleston.



MARK MAKEAU/THE NEW YORK TIMES
Donald Trump campaigns Saturday at the Spooky Nook Sports complex in Manheim, Pa.

Nothing's taxing to Trump

Republicans find plus side to tax revelation

BY STEVE PEOPLES
and LAURIE KELLMAN
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Ever defiant, Donald Trump and his Republican allies embraced a report Sunday that the New York businessman may not have paid federal income taxes for nearly two decades after he and his companies lost nearly \$916 million in a single year.

The unexpected revelation punctuated a week of missteps and aggressive personal attacks from the Republican presidential contender, with early voting already underway in some states and Election Day quickly approaching.

If there was a bright spot to the explosive story about his taxes in The New York Times, Trump supporters said, it was that it may shift the national conversation away from Trump's week-long feud with a former beauty queen he called "Miss Piggy" as he shamed her for gaining weight, and his unfounded suggestion Hillary Clinton may have cheated on her husband.

"He's not been on message," said Barry Bennett, a former Trump adviser. "A week was wasted where he could have been talking about the heroin epidemic and jobs and ISIS. All the money in the world can't get that time back."

The mounting challenges injected a new sense of urgency into Trump's White House bid with the next presidential debate a week away.

Please see TRUMP, Page A4

Devastating Columbia flood a wake-up call for region

BY ANDY SHAIN
ashain@free-press.com

COLUMBIA — The flood last October woke up the city.

The region had not gone through a weather disaster since Hurricane Hugo roared through the state in 1989, a generation ago.

"There are adults who do not remember Hurricane Hugo, and what came with it, all that rain and people losing electricity," said Kim Stenson, director of the South Carolina Emergency Management Division.

Inside

Massive Columbia Canal breach still waiting for repairs. A5

After several days of rain, a storm drenched the Midlands with more than a foot of water last Oct. 4 — bursting dozens of dams, closing hundreds of roads and bridges, and displacing enough people to fill Colonial Life Arena. Nine people died in Richland County, all from drowning when

Please see FLOOD, Page A5



FILE/US ARMY NATIONAL GUARD
More than 2 feet of rain dumped on the midlands last October.



Partly cloudy.
High 85, Low 67.
Complete 5-day
forecast, B10

Bridge B9
Business D1
Classifieds C7
Comics B8, 9
Crossword B8, D4
Editorials A10
Health B1
Movies B7
Obituaries B5
Sports C1
Sudoku B7
Television B7

Charleston
Deals today

Under Pressure SC
Pay \$99 for pressure washing
one or two story home.
Regularly \$199. See A2

**CLEMSON FOOTBALL**

For third year in a row, Clemson's defense comes up clutch in big game 1B

**USC FOOTBALL**

Gamecocks going back to two-QB rotation 1B

MONDAY OCTOBER 3 2016

\$1.00

VOL. 126TH, No. 229
STAY CONNECTED THESTATE.COMFACEBOOK.COM/THETSTATENEWS
TWITTER.COM/@THETSTATETODAY: PARTLY CLOUDY HI 85 LO 63
YESTERDAY: HI 86 LO 54 PRECIP. (as of 5 p.m.) Q
FORECAST, 8C

The State



Jennifer Coleman and her daughters, Effie, Katie, Ella and Gracie, explore the lake bed of Pine Tree Lake. During the first day of the flood, the Pine Tree Lake dam was one of several in the Gills Creek watershed that breached.

ONLINE

For many Midlands children, the flood of 2016 is a formative memory. What can adults do to prevent long-term trauma? See the video with this story online, at http://bit.ly/Flood_Anniversary

MORE ONLINE

- See "before," "during" and "after" photos of flood-stricken areas of the Midlands.
- A story map shows you the history of changes to Gills Creek wrought by development and industry.
- A history of major South Carolina floods.
- The Midlands came close to losing its water supply after the flood ripped a hole in the Columbia Canal.
- Some Midlands communities are making plans to rebuild their dams.

MORE INSIDE

- More than 100 people have hired lawyers to sue the federal government over the failure of the Semmes Lake dam, 7A
- **Palmetto Voices:** Having a water plan can help prepare us for next disaster, K

COMING UP

- **Tuesday:** How have local neighborhoods hardest hit by the floods recovered?

LOOKING BACK: THE FLOOD OF 2015

The fallen dams might rise again

Rebuilding would restore what floods left as dry lake beds

BY SAMMY FRETWELL
sfretwell@thestate.com

Dry lake beds aren't hard to find in South Carolina, a year after the worst flood many people can remember.

But in some areas, the scenery is expected to change.

Property owners are preparing the first applications to rebuild dams in Columbia's Gills Creek watershed since the storm hit last October. By next summer, water could be covering what became weed-filled mud flats at Lower Rockyford Lake, Cary Lake and Upper Rockyford Lake.

Property owners at Ulmer's Pond, several miles away in eastern Richland County, already have applied for a recon-

struction permit and await word on whether the request will be approved, as proposed, by the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control.

Since the storm, dozens of people who own dams have applied for state approval to repair the structures — about three dozen permits to fix damage have been issued. However, if any, have asked DHEC for permission to reconstruct blown-out dams, the agency reports. The process has been expensive and time-consuming for private landowners seeking to hire engineers to design new dams.

Now, some homeowners groups have secured funding for the work and are moving to get their reconstruction projects launched. More than 50

state-regulated dams and an untold number of unregulated ones breached during the October 2015 flood.

Plans to restore dams in the Columbia area are part of a nearly year-long recovery effort by pond owners trying to regain what they lost: the water that made their life pleasant.

Erich Miarka, director of the Gills Creek Watershed Association, said many people miss the lakes that for generations have enhanced property values. That's certainly the case in the watershed he patrols. Gills Creek and its tributaries are effectively one long string of lakes from northeast Richland to Lake Katherine in southeast Columbia.

DUTCH FORK HIGH

Trial opens Monday in slaying

■ Lexington County high school teen killing case: trial opens Monday in Dutch Fork High student knife slaying

BY JOHN MONK
jmonk@thestate.com

LEXINGTON

A trial is set to begin Monday afternoon in Lexington in the case of a deadly encounter in which a Dutch Fork High School student was fatally stabbed in a fast-food eatery parking lot after a 2014 basketball game.

Kierin Dennis, then a recent 18-year-old graduate of Lexington High, is on trial for murder in the death of Da'Von Capers, a 17-year-old Dutch Fork High senior. The two schools are rivals and had just played.

Dennis and Capers, who did not know each other, were thrown together by chance in the parking lot of the Cook-Out restaurant in Lexington on Feb. 17, 2014. It was a volatile situation, and youthful passions



Dennis



Capers

SEE TRIAL, 6A

**GOLF**

U.S. TAKES THE CUP

The U.S. team gets its first win since 2008, beating the Europeans to take the Ryder Cup, 1B

SEE DAMS, 7A

A COMMUNITY MOURNS

2 TRAGIC LOSSES



KATIE MCLEAN/INDEPENDENT MAIL

Renee Hall, mother of 6-year-old Jacob Hall who died after being shot, cries as she hugs Connie Upchurch, a close family friend, before releasing balloons in celebration of Jacob's life Sunday.

Townville area remains strong

NIKIE MAYO AND
ABE HARDESTY
INDEPENDENT MAIL

TOWNVILLE - In the days after a shooting at an elementary school rocked this rural Anderson County town, residents used social media and community signs to show the world they intend to remain #TownvilleStrong.

They quickly proved those words are not empty.

The response to a blood drive honoring Jacob Hall, a 6-year-old Townville Elementary School student who was shot, was so large Sunday that additional workers from The Blood Connection had to be called to handle the crowd of willing donors.

Jacob died Saturday afternoon of his injuries, but officials at the Townville fire station decided to go ahead with the blood drive anyway, hoping it would be a small step toward healing a community.

"The response from the community has been overwhelming," Fire Chief Billy McAdams said.

Some of his volunteer firefighters directed traffic around the fire station where the blood drive was held, as dozens waited to roll up their sleeves.

Organizers said donors came from throughout the Upstate, Georgia, North Carolina and even a mother and daughter who are part of the Sandy Hook, Connecticut community, the scene of another school shooting.

"It's a way for everybody to come together," said Becky Bayne, who drove to Townville from Easley.

Some drove to the fire station just to add to a stack of teddy bears. The stuffed toys will be given to Townville Elementary School students.

Expressions of support also came from such businesses as The Pendleton Print House, which produced "Townville Strong" T-shirts at cost, with any proceeds of the sale going to the families of the victims.

Longtime Townville resi-



PROVIDED

FUNERAL SERVICES FOR JACOB HALL

Funeral services for Jacob will be held at 11 a.m. Wednesday at Oakdale Baptist Church. Visitation also will be held at the Townville church from 5-9 p.m. Tuesday. As Jacob was a big fan of comic book superheroes, the public is welcome to wear their favorite superhero costume or shirt to the visitation.

ON THE WEB

Get more coverage on the Townville school shooting and watch video as the community comes together to mourn the lives lost at GreenvilleOnline.com.

Funeral held for suspect's father

KIRK BROWN
INDEPENDENT MAIL
AND ROMANDO DIXSON
GREENVILLE NEWS

TOWNVILLE - Jeffrey Osborne, the 47-year-old father of the teen accused of shooting him and then three people at Townville Elementary School on Wednesday, was laid to rest Sunday afternoon in this quiet rural community.

Osborne, who owned a poultry farm near Townville was remembered as an avid motorcyclist and a good neighbor.

More than dozen bikers gathered in the parking lot outside the church on Sunday, among Osborne's friends and neighbors who mourned.

Neighbors Dwain and Sheila Brown came to the church Sunday to pay their respects. They live near the Osborne family on Jolly Road. Dwain Brown described Jeffrey Osborne as a big-hearted and kind man who allowed hunters to use his land.

"He was the kind of fella you wanted for a neighbor or

a brother," Dwain Brown said.

The Browns said Jeffrey Osborne's extended family is seen as pillars of the community.

Dwain Brown said he went to school with Jeffrey Osborne's parents. He described the whole family as good people, "just like you think country people ought to be."

Authorities say 14-year-old Jesse Osborne fatally shot his father last Wednesday before shooting a teacher and two students near the playground at Townville Elementary. One of the wounded students, 6-year-old Jacob Hall, died Saturday. The other student and first-grade teacher Meghan Hollingsworth were treated at AnMed Health Medical Center in Anderson and released. Jesse Osborne is facing murder and attempted murder charges.

Sunday's funeral for Jeffrey Osborne took place at Oakdale Baptist Church,

See **FUNERAL**, Page 5A

Independent Mail

MONDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2016

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

INDEPENDENTMAIL.COM

TOWNVILLE SCHOOL SHOOTING

TOWNVILLE STRONG



KATIE MCLEAN/INDEPENDENT MAIL

Renae Hall, mother of 6-year-old Jacob Hall who died after being shot, cries as she hugs Connie Upchurch, a close family friend, before releasing balloons in celebration of Jacob's life following a prayer service at Oakdale Baptist church on Sunday in Townville. "Please don't cry for Jacob," Renae repeated during the balloon ceremony. "He's with Jesus now."

Residents unite amid aftermath

NIKIE MAYO
NIKIE.MAYO@INDEPENDENTMAIL.COM AND
ABE HARDESTY
ABE.HARDESTY@INDEPENDENTMAIL.COM

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NATHAN GRAY/SPECIAL TO INDEPENDENT MAIL

Jason Meredith hugs his daughter Abigail Meredith, 5, at a memorial made for Jacob Hall at Townville Elementary School on Sunday afternoon. Abigail is a student at the school.



FUNERAL SERVICES FOR JACOB HALL

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Funeral held for suspect's slain father

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KIRK.BROWN@INDEPENDENTMAIL.COM AND
ROMANDO DIXSON
RDIXSON@GREENVILLENEWS.COM

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FALCONS, JONES CLAW PANTHERS

SPORTS, B1



US TEAM WINS BACK RYDER CUP

SPORTS, B1

Herald-Journal

SPARTANBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA

Monday, October 3, 2016



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TODAY **TUE** **WED**

 82°/61° 78°/59° 75°/58°
 Complete forecast, A8

IN BRIEF

75-year-old man killed in Union County

The Union County Sheriff's Office reports that a 75-year-old Whitmire man was shot and killed Sunday afternoon.

Sheriff David Taylor said deputies responded at 12:22 p.m. to 123 Wilkerson Road, Whitmire, for a reported shooting.

They found James K. Smith inside the residence with a single gunshot wound. Taylor said Smith was found deceased.

Taylor said the investigation is ongoing.

Woman dies from injuries in vehicle crash

The Spartanburg County Coroner's Office reported that a Cross Hill woman has died from the injuries she sustained in a motor vehicle crash.

Randy Bogan, an investigator with the Spartanburg County Coroner's Office, said Marlene Morrison Rushton, 74, of Tomachichi Road, was involved in a crash on Drayton Road on Saturday and was taken to Spartanburg Medical Center. She died at the hospital on Sunday, according to Bogan.

According to the South Carolina Highway Patrol, the crash occurred at 3:45 p.m. Saturday on Drayton Road. Larry Rushton, 75, of Cross Hill was driving a 2014 Kia vehicle when it was struck on the passenger side by a 2009 Ford pickup truck driven by a 16-year-old driver from Spartanburg. The pickup truck was traveling eastbound on Drayton Road when it struck the Kia vehicle, which was facing east on Drayton Road attempting a right turn. Marlene Rushton was a passenger in the Kia vehicle.

According to the Highway Patrol, Larry Rushton was charged with improper turn.

— From staff reports

TIP SHEET

HURRICANE MATTHEW



A man surfs at Wickie Wackie Beach before the arrival of Hurricane Matthew in Kingston, Jamaica, on Sunday. The powerful storm moved slowly across the Caribbean on Sunday with winds of 140 mph. It has the potential to reach the East Coast of the United States. EDUARDO VERDUGO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

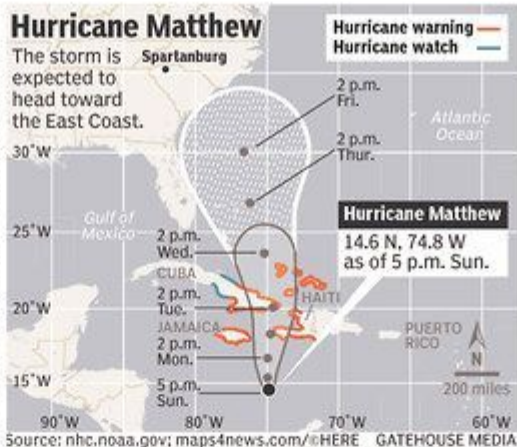
Emergency officials getting ready

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — South Carolina's emergency preparedness officials have begun preparing for Hurricane Matthew, one of the most powerful Atlantic storms in recent history and one that could affect the East Coast.

In a news release issued Sunday, the South Carolina Emergency Management Division recommended that the state's emergency response team review plans. Officials in four counties — Horry, Beaufort, Georgetown and Charleston — said they were on alert status. However, emergency operations centers are not yet operating.

"It's too soon to rule out any possibilities," division director Kim Stenson said. "Hurricane Matthew has quickly strengthened into a dangerous storm and its projected path could put South Carolina in harm's way. Fortunately, people in South Carolina have time. While we hope we never see a hurricane head our way, we



and flooding are possible even if Matthew remains at sea, local weather service forecasters said.

Emergency management officials recommend that people in potentially vulnerable areas review personal safety plans, become familiar local evacuation zones in coastal counties and locate the nearest hurricane evacuation routes. The 2016 S.C.

Sea on a track that authorities warned could trigger devastation in parts of Haiti.

The storm was expected to pass across or very close to the southwestern tip of Haiti late Monday before reaching Cuba, according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami.

Matthew briefly reached the top classification, Category 5. The hurricane center said it

WORKERS COMP

County reports 45 mold claims

By Bob Montgomery
 bob.montgomery@shj.com

Spartanburg County has received 45 health-related workers compensation claims since the courthouse mold removal project began in mid-July, officials said.

"Based on complaints to me and emails sent to me, I'm not surprised," said Clerk of Court Hope Blackley, who oversees all departments at the courthouse and its 240 employees.

The county Council in July agreed to spend up to \$300,000 to remove mold from the 50-year-old county-owned facility on Magnolia Street.

The project was supposed to be finished by Labor Day, but work crews ran into more mold issues than anticipated. In August, Blackley ordered several departments in the courthouse to move until their areas were remediated.

While most departments are back to their regular locations, Blackley said she continues to receive health-related complaints from employees, such as swollen eyes, raspy voices, sore throats and nose bleeds.

When she receives complaints, she forwards them to the county's risk manager and courthouse building superintendent, she said.

In mid-July, when the mold removal project started, County Administrator Katherine O'Neill said employees could see an occupational health doctor with Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System at the county's expense.

On Aug. 30, the Herald-Journal, through a Freedom of Information Act request, asked the county for copies of any letter or complaint between 2012 and Aug. 30, 2016, from any county employee that concerns or makes mention of health risks associated with



Panthers tackle tough foe Atlanta

Find out how they did in **Sports, 1B**

INDEX-JOURNAL

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THOUSAND-YEAR FLOOD: A YEAR LATER

Rebuilding continues



FILE PHOTOS BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

Will Cunningham, 14, rides his bike down Station 29 on Sullivan's Island, with his friend Patrick Kelly, 14, going the kayak route during flood waters on Sullivan's Island. Nearly a year after 2 feet of rain fell on South Carolina, hundreds of people are still trying to fix their homes.

Floods' pain still felt in rural areas of state

By **JEFFREY COLLINS**
Associated Press

KINGSTREE — A world away from South Carolina's booming coastal resorts, hundreds of homes remain unrepaired in the county hardest hit by last year's floods. Now they're getting one last push of help.

A Christian group of about 1,500 carpenters, plumbers, electricians and other volunteers that formed in response to Hurricane Katrina is on its way to Williamsburg County, where flooding damaged 28 percent of the homes badly enough to qualify for federal aid.

"We're coming here to rebuild homes and help their souls out too," said Steve Tybor III, the president and co-founder of Eight Days of Hope, which aims to fix 150 homes with moldy walls, leaky roofs and holes in their flooring.

The volunteers are responding to a critical need. As wide-scale weather disasters become the new normal, rural communities like Williamsburg



A couple takes photos as a wave crashes against a wall along The Battery in Charleston.

County are being left behind not so much by federal and state officials, but by the skilled workers they need to repair their homes. Most repairmen followed the money to urban areas, or to the next disaster.

The nearly two feet of rain that swamped the state last October caused the slow-flowing, tea-colored Black River to rise 18 feet in five days, cresting at double its flood stage, three feet above what anyone alive

had ever seen.

Willette Thompson's mobile home still isn't right. The rain damaged her roof, there's mold in her walls, and the moisture created two holes in her floor that she covers with rugs and bottles of water. Federal disaster money paid for replacement flooring and a new front door, but they remain in boxes, unopened. The contractor she hired stopped returning her calls long ago.

County officials say many hundreds of the 3,349 homes that received Federal Emergency Management Agency money still aren't fixed.

Most of the homes that suffered the worst damage have been abandoned or demolished. But homes that weren't damaged beyond repair remain inhabited, even though they could be full of dangerous mold or safety hazards after water settled into drywall, roofs and foundations.

These people are the ones struggling to find help.

"You have to have a place to live,"

See **PAIN**, page 3A

GREENWOOD

Cleanup, damage remain

By **DAMIAN DOMINGUEZ**
and **ADAM BENSON**
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abenson@indexjournal.com

From the hill above their home, Leroy and Tina Byrd watched the field across from their porch turn into a pond.

Tina was able to park her newly bought SUV safely above the rush of water. Leroy frantically tried to drive Tina's beloved, older car up the hill from the Wilson Creek neighborhood, but the car didn't make it.

Despite months of wading through federal paperwork seeking help, her car still sits where the flood waters reached it. Its tires sunk into the ground, with caked mud along the car's interior and a line showing that water

See **CLEANUP**, page 3A

ABBEVILLE

Recovery ongoing across county

By **CONOR HUGHES**
chughes@indexjournal.com

A year has passed since historic flooding spanned the region, but the long process of recovery is still ongoing.

Abbeville County met with the Federal Emergency Management Administration on Thursday to close out a project to fix roads throughout the county.

The project cost about \$200,000, according to County Director David Porter, and there are still more repairs to

See **RECOVERY**, page 3A

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YOUR LOCAL NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1867

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INSIDE TODAY



Task completed as U.S. wins back Ryder Cup
Sports, 6A



Braves give Turner Field a rousing send-off
Sports, 7A



Son recounts father's experiences with MS
Living on the Go, 1B



Congregation celebrates 25th anniversary of rector
Local news, 2A

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AREA DEATHS

Moses Bush Sr., Aiken
Azalea Bernice Ramsey, Aiken
Deaths and Funerals, 4A

WEATHER

October flood damage apparent one year later



Clint Brown, of the Wagener-Salley area, said he experienced a total 200-acre loss of cotton due to last year's flooding. Local Aiken County farmers are still feel the impact of last year's historic flooding.

Farmers' resiliency following floods inspires local pastor

BY DAN BROWN
dbrown@aikenstandard.com

It has been a long, hard year for the people of rural Aiken County.

The epic floods of Oct. 3, 4 and 5 of 2015 knocked the rural county residents to their knees with some parts of northern and eastern Aiken County still feeling the effects last year's storms even today.

The 20-plus inches that fell in parts of Aiken County washed out roads and bridges, burst dams and permanently altered the rolling landscape of the county's farming community.

In the months that followed, government relief was slow in coming, if at all, and some farmers were forced to sell off equipment to make ends meet.

Despite their hardship, these farming communities persevered and shouldered onward, as this is what farmers do, said Pastor Butch Blackwell of Clinton United Methodist Church in Salley.

"They inspire me on a daily basis," Blackwell said. "This is a model community where people roll up their sleeves and help each other, without question. Difference in race, religion or political affiliation, none of that matters to farmers. We are all neighbors here. We



A portion of Cumbee Trail Road collapsed after heavy amounts of flooding in October 2015.

are family."

Immediately after the storms hit, Blackwell said, the community came together, not because there was a storm, but because in a farming community, people come together during difficult times and help each other out.

"Farmers are extraordinarily resilient people," he said. "When it's dry and their crops don't come in, they turn the dirt over. When it rains and it washes the crops away, they plant again. These are salt of the earth folks. After a year of economic

challenges for farmers and those residents in the area that suffered damage to their homes, spirits have remained high. People have come together."

Old Shoals Road still closed for bridge repair

The S.C. Department of Transportation expects a portion of Old Shoals Road to open back up

Please see **FLOOD**, Page 10A



Tyesha Simmons holds her favorite picture of her little brother Travis Smith, who was killed on Sept. 29, 2012, at a North Augusta apartment complex. She said she still has hope that his killer will be found and brought to justice.

Four years later, N.A. murder remains unsolved

BY TRIPP GIRARDEAU
tgirardeau@aikenstandard.com

Tyesha Simmons hasn't given up on finding her brother's killer despite four years passing since he was gunned down in a North Augusta apartment complex.

Travis Smith, 28, was shot just before 3 a.m. on Sept. 29, 2012, while standing outside of a home in the Ridgeview Manor complex in North Augusta, according to a report provided by the North Augusta Department of Public Safety.

Officers arrived at the home and found Smith on the couch, dead from a gunshot wound to his abdomen, the report said.

Though North Augusta investigators are still not closer to finding Smith's killer, Simmons remains hopeful that her brother's killer will be brought to justice.

"I don't want him to become another statistic. I want to get these people off the street," Simmons said, holding a portrait of her brother. "When you have cases like this and it's unsolved, people are not held accountable for their actions. They could hurt someone else, and I don't want that to happen."

Since her brother's death, Simmons has been persistent not only in keeping interest in Smith's case alive, but also in maintaining contact with investigators and news outlets.

Simmons has handed out flyers, set up social media groups and co-organized local events to bring attention to unsolved murders.

She said what she remembers and

Please see **MURDER**, Page 4A

First responders train to combat opioid overdose

BY TRIPP GIRARDEAU
tgirardeau@aikenstandard.com

Aiken County is no exception in South Carolina's fight against opioid addiction, and with a nearly \$3.2 million statewide grant, officials are hoping to see reductions in the number of overdose-related deaths both statewide and locally.

In September, the S.C. Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services received a federal grant of approximately \$3,192,772 to reduce the number of prescription drug/opioid overdose-related deaths and adverse events in the state.

Training will help save lives

South Carolina is one of 12 states to receive funding through the five-year grant, said Jimmy Mount, public information officer and training coordinator with the Administration.

"This grant will allow for a trainer to come from the Department of Health and Environmental Control to areas all over the state to train first responders and law enforcement to recognize an opioid overdose and how to administer naloxone when overdose occurs," Mount said. "This will save lives."

Naloxone blocks or reverses the effects of





Morning News

MONDAY OCTOBER 3, 2016

The Voice of the Pee Dee

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Country at the Civic Center

Tanya Tucker, Terri Clark and Deana Carter to perform Nov. 18

From staff reports

FLORENCE — Three of country music's most notable female artists will perform together Nov. 18 at the Florence Civic Center for a special event.

Tanya Tucker, a defining voice of country music, will perform with her full concert band in addition to acoustic sessions with Terri Clark and Deana Carter on that Friday.

Tucker has inspired many female artists who still top the charts today. She recorded her first Top 10 hit, "Delta Dawn," at age 13, and is known for edgy and unpredictable performances.

Terri Clark is from Medicine Hat, Alberta, and is a two-time JUNO Award winner and eight-time Canadian Country Music Association

See **TUCKER**, Page 3A

IF YOU GO

» **WHAT:** Tanya Tucker Live in Concert With Special Guests Terri Clark and Deana Carter

» **WHEN:** 7:30 p.m. Nov. 18

» **WHERE:** Florence Civic Center

» **TICKETS:** On sale now starting at \$30 and available at the Civic Center Box Office, at Ticketmaster.com or by phone at 800-745-3000



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A defining voice of country music, Tanya Tucker will perform Nov. 18 at the Florence Civic Center.



Each Monday, the Morning News features a good news story on a person, place or organization in the Pee Dee. If you have a suggestion for someone or something to profile, send it to news@scnw.com.

The Nouviata project



Jesse Sternberg (left), Augusta Jackson (center) and Kendra Lambert pose on the Coker College campus in Hartsville. The students are in a business group that started a project creating jobs for women in Moldova.

Coker students want to craft a new life for women of Moldova

BY MEGAN MAY
Morning News
mmay@florencenews.com

HARTSVILLE — Eight students at Coker College are trying to help a group of women they've never met thousands

of miles away.

The students, who are in Coker's Enactus business club, began a project this summer to help women in Moldova, a small country that borders Romania and Ukraine. Their goal is to help provide skills

in crafting to keep the women from having to turn to dangerous jobs such as prostitution and potentially fall into the realm of human trafficking.

"Right now our mission statement is, 'Crafting a new life for women,'" project

member Augusta Jackson said. "We're still working on it, but the name of the project is Nouviata, which means, 'new life,' in Romanian."

The group is teaming with

See **COKE**, Page 3A

International jazz artist to appear in hometown

From staff reports

FLORENCE — International jazz musician and Florence native eZra Brown will appear today and Tuesday in his hometown.

At 7 p.m. today, Brown will conduct a free master class that will be open to the public at the Francis Marion University Performing Arts Center in downtown Florence.

At 2 p.m. Tuesday, Brown will visit Wilson High School.

Brown has performed on international stages around the world, with artists such as B.B. King, Stevie Wonder, Dorothy Moore, Anita Baker, Bobby "Blue" Bland, Wilson Pickett and many others.

According to his publisher, Wanda Joe, Brown is interested in sowing into the lives of Florence youth.

"I am always excited about sharing the knowledge and experience that I've gained performing and touring the world," Brown said in a news release.

Brown lives in Indonesia but is proud to call Florence his home. He said he is most passionate about encouraging local youth to dream bigger.

He will present and perform for Wilson High School band students at 2 p.m. Tuesday. Jarrod Deas, the Wilson band director, has invited Brown to meet his band students.

Tonight, Brown will showcase the EB1, his first signature saxophone in the eZra Brown X Java Saxophone line. He also will talk about how branding, speed learning, playing/style techniques and how growing up in the Pee Dee prepared him for becoming a



Brown

See **EZRA**, Page 3A

Pee Dee Land Trust Executive Director David Harper talks about the Woods and Louise



Students become environmental detectives

BY MATTHEW ROBERTSON
Morning News
mrobertson@scnw.com

DARLINGTON — A ribbon-cutting and nature walk drew

The land was held in trust initially by the Black Creek Land Trust and then, after a merger, the Pee Dee Land Trust. It has had a well-marked trail and been available to the public since the

dren. They acquired the land in 1941.

"A lot of upland, but then there are swamplands close to the creek," Harper said. "We really consider it a living ecosystem."

Camlin Moore

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