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Subject: SC Front Pages - Thursday, March 17, 2016

SC Front Pages – Thursday, March 17, 2016



SPORTS

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER



METRO

Taking a break to do some good

The Greenville News

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

THURSDAY,
MARCH 17, 2016
GREENVILLEONLINE.COM

USA TODAY NETWORK INVESTIGATION

DHEC MISSED
NEEDED LEAD TESTS

South Carolina health department did not monitor for lead as closely as it should have in some public water systems

NATHANIEL CARY
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South Carolina's health department did not monitor drinking water quality of some of the state's public water systems that exceeded the Environmental Protection Agency's action level for lead as closely as it should have, an investigation by *The Greenville News* has found.

At least 10 systems that have triggered the action level for lead between 2011 and 2015 should have been required to take semi-annual lead samples to ensure that measures being implemented to reduce lead in the drinking water were effective, but the state Department of Health and Environmental Control allowed those systems to remain on a three-year monitoring schedule.

"Under the rule, when there is an exceedance, they really should be moved to semi-annual monitoring," David Baize, DHEC's acting water chief, told *The Greenville News*. "That was not done in a timely manner in all cases, and we've corrected that now."

Moving to semi-annual testing is required under the EPA's Lead and Copper Rule and would have allowed regulators to see whether lead exceedances were a one-time anomaly or an ongoing issue that needs corrective action.

The department is making major changes to its

drinking water oversight after a review of its program in response to the crisis in Flint, Michigan, where residents consumed lead-tainted drinking water for months from corroded pipes after the city switched its water supply to a source that did not provide corrosion control.

What transpired in Flint could not happen on the same scale in South Carolina because the state's drinking water officials must review all water system's source water changes, Baize said.

And South Carolina's largest water providers, among them Greenville Water System, all add corrosion control to their water, which forms a protective seal on copper or galvanized pipes and prevents corrosion from leaching into water at customer's taps, Baize said.

But South Carolina has seen its share of issues among small and medium-sized, mostly rural, water systems, which make up all of the 28 water system's

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USA TODAY NETWORK
INVESTIGATION

High lead levels found in water systems across the nation.

Page 1B

House gives
key OK to
Tucker
Hipps bill

TIM SMITH

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COLUMBIA - Legislation to require South Carolina public colleges and universities to post student misconduct violations by fraternities and sororities has received key approval in the state House.

House lawmakers voted 84-0 to give the Tucker Hipps Transparency Act second reading Wednesday as Hipps' parents watched from the balcony.

Hipps was a Clemson University sophomore from Piedmont whose body was found in Lake Hartwell in

2014 after a pre-dawn run with members of a fraternity to which he had pledged. His family has filed lawsuits seeking damages for the family's loss against three individual members of the fraternity, the local chapter and national fraternity and Clemson University.

"This is about keeping the students safe," Rep. Bill Taylor, an Aiken Republican and one of the bill's sponsors, told the House about the legislation. "This is a major step forward."

The legislation would require colleges and universities to prepare reports at least twice a year listing student conduct violations by fraternities and sororities registered with the schools and involving members of the organizations.

Schools would be required to report violations involving alcohol, drugs, hazing, threats, sexual assault, harm to others and endangerment.

No students' names or personal identifying information would be included in the reports, though fraternities and sororities would be named. The reports would also note any police reports that would be available through requests under the state Freedom of Information Act.

The schools would be asked under the bill to file their first reports before the fall semester this year. The initial reports would include all violations dating back to 2011, though schools could ask for a one-year waiver for the first report.

The reports, under the bill, must be

See HIPPS, Page 4A

Speaker says House won't seek gas tax hike

TIM SMITH
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COLUMBIA - The state Legislature will not increase the gas tax this year, according to a letter from House Speaker Jay Lucas to Gov. Nikki Haley.

Lucas, who last week criticized the Senate's roads bill as failing to address a long-term solution for infrastructure, told Haley on Wednesday that House Republicans, who hold a majority in the

chamber, will not insist on the House version of the roads bill, which would have raised prices at the pump to fund road work.

The Senate's version, passed last week largely along party lines, would address road and bridge repairs by using \$400 million in recurring money from the General Fund instead of by raising the gas tax. Democrats argued the gas tax is the most practical way of addressing the state's long-term infrastructure

needs.

Haley talked to the House GOP Caucus this week, Lucas wrote, and shared his concern about a long-term solution.

"Thank you for expressing a concern a vast majority of our caucus shares by recognizing that the Senate bill does not contain a sustainable funding solution," he wrote. "We also appreciate your pledge to work with us to quickly create a long-term sustainable funding model."

Haley last year told lawmakers she

would approve a 10-cent increase in the gas tax, last raised in 1987, but only if they also passed an income tax rate cut and reformed the way state highway commissioners are selected. Tying the three issues together tied the Senate in knots.

House Republicans at first embraced a plan that addressed all three issues, but Democrats rejected the idea of a tax cut,

See TAX, Page 7A

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Morning News

THURSDAY MARCH 17, 2016

TODAY'S WEATHER

Partly sunny and very warm.
High 82, low 48.
DETAILS 2A

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It's a two-step combo

Travis Tritt, The Charlie Daniels Band to perform a pair of shows at PAC

BY DEBORAH SWEARINGEN
Morning News
dswearingen@florencenews.com

FLORENCE — Country music greats Travis Tritt and The Charlie Daniels Band are coming to the Francis Marion University Performing Arts Center for a pair of spring concerts.



Tritt

Tritt will take the stage on May 12, and Charlie Daniels will perform June 2. Each performance begins at 7:30 p.m.

Both are Grammy-award winners with dozens of chart-topping songs and albums.

"We know that it's going to be quite a fun evening for both shows," said Laura Sims, executive director at the PAC.

Tritt performed at the venue in 2014, and the night was such a success that the PAC decided to bring him back. While his first show was a one-man acoustic performance, this time he will have his full band alongside him.

"Travis had a wonderful time when he was here the last time," Sims said. "He said really great things."

See **BAND**, Page 3A

Candidates file for Pee Dee offices

BY JOSHUA LLOYD
Morning News
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FLORENCE — Wednesday was first day of state and local filing for candidates seeking elected office in 2016.



Several candidates across the Pee Dee have already filed and will be on the ballot in the June primaries.

Candidates who have filed so far include:

U.S. House of Representatives District 7
Tom Rice (R) — incumbent

U.S. House of Representatives District 6
Laura Sterling (R)

South Carolina Senate District 31
Dean Fowler Jr. (R)

OUTLOOK LUNCHEON



PHOTOS BY JOSHUA LLOYD/MORNING NEWS

Florence Mayor Stephen J. Wukela speaks at the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce 2016 Outlook luncheon on Wednesday at the Florence Civic Center.

State of the City

Mayor touts growth, unity

BY JOSHUA LLOYD
Morning News
jlloyd@florencenews.com

FLORENCE — "The city of Florence is in a state of growth."

Florence Mayor Stephen J. Wukela told hundreds of Florence business leaders and government officials gathered for

the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce's annual outlook luncheon that the city saw tremendous growth in 2015 and the coming year will be no different.

He touched on city and private investment that brought construction and redevelopment of the new Stoke's Eye

Center, the \$10 million in HopeHealth facility, the \$10 million Kress Corner restructuring, the \$18 million parking garage and apartment complex, the \$4 million unnamed Project Morgan, the \$15 million Francis Marion University Health Sciences facility, the collaboration between the city

and Florence School District 1 to renovate several building, a \$7.5 million soccer complex, a \$5 million basketball gymnasium and new home construction in urban neighborhoods.

Wukela said Florence's growth is possible through a

See **CITY**, Page 3A

State of the County



Florence County Council Chairman Roger Poston speaks about progress underway in the county.

Poston says: We'll continue to forge ahead

BY JOSHUA LLOYD
Morning News
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of Florence business leaders and government officials gathered for

Armstrong named Small-Business Person of the Year

BY JOE PERRY
Morning News
jperry@florencenews.com

FLORENCE — Regi Armstrong of Armstrong Wealth Management Group was named Wednesday as the 2016 Small-Business Person of

the Year.

He accepted the award during the 2016 Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce Spring Outlook luncheon at the Florence Civic Center.

Jim Ivey, executive vice

See **BUSINESS**, Page 3A





STRONG DEFENSE

Brownell not approaching next season as do-or-die. C1

SPRING IN THE AIR: BellFest planned Saturday at Devil's Fork State Park. B1
HIGH COURT NOMINEE: Obama nominates Garland for Supreme Court. D1



A firefighter sprays down hotspots after an afternoon fire burned around 10 acres of woods in Seneca on Wednesday. Five agencies responded to battle the blaze.

'Perfect for a fire'

Blaze burns 10 acres in Seneca on hot, dry day

BY ERIC SPROTT
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — A day that featured numerous record high temperatures in the Upstate also provided the perfect recipe for fires throughout Oconee County on Wednesday.

Oconee County Deputy Fire Chief Buck Haney said Oconee County Emergency Services responded to a handful of fires throughout the day, but the most serious occurred in Seneca near Maple Grove Road just off of Perkins Creek Road.

With temperatures above 80 degrees and low humidity to go along with gusty winds on one of the final days of winter, Seneca firefighter Jason Faulkenberry said conditions were "perfect for a fire to take off and go" Wednesday.

"We don't know exactly the extent of the fire," he said. "We had a woods fire, and at this time, we're probably looking at 10 or more acres."

The initial call came in at 3:22 p.m., and the fire was contained shortly before 5 p.m., with the S.C. Forestry Commission helping cut



A firefighter holding an ax walks toward the smoke of a fire that burned several acres of woods in Seneca on Wednesday afternoon.

a fire line around the area to prevent it from spreading further.

Though the fire was near a residential area, no homes were damaged in the blaze. The cause was under investigation as of Wednesday evening.

In addition to Seneca and the

S.C. Forestry Commission, the Corinth-Shiloh, Westminster and Friendship fire departments also assisted with the blaze, Faulkenberry said.

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Westminster administrator resigns post

New job in Moncks Corner will put Lord closer to family

BY STEPHANIE JADRNICKE
THE JOURNAL

FOR MORE

To read a related editorial, turn to page A4.

WESTMINSTER — After making some great strides in Westminster, city administrator Jeff Lord will be moving on to Moncks Corner.

Lord came on board with the city of Westminster in July 2014. He had worked in municipal government for nine years in Walterboro — four as finance director and the last five as city manager.

He announced his resignation at Tuesday evening's city council meeting. His last day



Lord
"I have really enjoyed my time with the city of

SEE LORD, PAGE A5

Oconee sheriff to seek second term

BY STEVEN BRADLEY
THE JOURNAL

the only career I have known and therefore am seeking another term as your sheriff."

In his 29th year in law enforcement, Crenshaw said his lengthy career in Oconee has allowed him to get to know many of the county's citizens and understand its dynamics.

"My belief has always been that in order to be successful in this profession, we must build relationships with our citizens in order to earn the public's trust," he said.



Crenshaw

SENECA — Now in his fourth year in office after winning a vigorous three-man race in 2012, popular Oconee County Sheriff Mike Crenshaw says he will seek a second term.

Crenshaw, who plans to file as a Republican in the June 14 primary, said Wednesday night he believes he's accomplished many of the goals he promoted in his campaign, but also admitted there is always room for improvement.

"I enjoy serving the citizens of our county," he said in a news release. "I enjoy law enforcement. I would like to continue

SEE SHERIFF, PAGE A5

Candidates turn in paperwork as filing starts for elections

THE JOURNAL STAFF

Solicitor Chrissy Adams

More Americans expected to vote 'other' in presidential race

BY CARLOS GALARZA-VEVE
THE JOURNAL



SEE WHY
ASHEVILLE IS
'BEER CITY'

ESCAPE, D1



BLOSSOMGAME
COULD TAKE
SKILLS TO NBA

SPORTS, B1



Herald-Journal

SPARTANBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA

Thursday, March 17, 2016



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TODAY FRI SAT



75°/45° 71°/44° 53°/38°

Complete forecast, B8

SPORTS



Spring practice

New South Carolina football coach Will Muschamp is a big fan of spring practices, when the chance to really start mentoring players in his first year with the program begins to take hold. The Gamecocks started the first of their 15-practice allotment Tuesday. **B1**

UPSTATE

SNAP changes

Some South Carolinians who are receiving benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will see a change in eligibility next month. **C1**

Unmet needs

A Spartanburg County group is looking at ways to address unmet needs in the community. The Spartanburg County Behavioral Health Taskforce held its first quarterly meeting of the year Wednesday to discuss focus areas. **C1**

INSIDE



More convincing wins for Trump

After yet another round of convincing victories for Donald Trump, Republican leaders spent Wednesday wavering between grudging acceptance and deep denial about the businessman's likely ascent to the

SUPREME COURT NOMINATION

Garland picked for high court

By Kathleen Hennessey
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama nominated appeals court judge Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court on Wednesday, thrusting a respected moderate jurist and former prosecutor into the center of an election-year clash over the future of the nation's highest court.

Obama cast the 63-year-old Garland as "a serious man and an exemplary judge" deserving of a full hearing and

a Senate confirmation vote, despite Republican vows to deny him both. Standing in the White House Rose Garden with Garland, Obama argued the integrity of the court was at stake and appealed to the Senate to "play it straight" in filling the seat left vacant by the death of Justice Antonin Scalia.

"It's supposed to be above politics," Obama said of the high court. "It has to be. And it should stay that way."

Republican leaders, however,



Federal appeals court judge Merrick Garland, center, receives applause from President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden as he is introduced as Obama's nominee for the Supreme Court on Wednesday. **PABLO MARTINEZ**

SEE GARLAND, A3

DETERRENCE

TURNING UP THE HEAT

New bill reinstates tough penalties for arson crimes

By Daniel J. Gross
daniel.gross@shl.com

Area lawmakers and fire officials hope a return to tough arson penalties will deter people from committing such crimes.

A bill that restructures the degrees of arson was unanimously approved by state legislators Wednesday and now goes to Gov. Nikki Haley's desk to be signed into law.

The "clean-up bill" essentially changes arson laws back to the way they were prior to 2010, when the Omnibus Crime Reduction and Sentencing Reform Act was passed.

That law, in part, reduced sentences for arson offenders and made it more difficult to hand down an arson charge. A first-degree arson

charge required that a person be killed in an intentionally set fire, and any lesser-degree arson charge required that a person suffer bodily injury.

Under the new bill, a suspect can be charged with first-degree arson if the fire involves death or serious bodily injury and would face a penalty of no less than 30 years in prison upon conviction.

SEE ARSON, A3

A burned out home on West Victoria Road in Spartanburg from 2015 is still under investigation. **ALEX HICKS JR./ALEX.HICKS@SHL.COM**



Under the new bill

- First-degree arson would be charged if the fire involves death or serious bodily injury. The penalty would be 30 years in prison upon conviction.
- Second-degree arson would be charged if the fire damages or destroys any building typically occupied by people, such as homes, or businesses. The penalty would be 3 years minimum and no more than 25 years in prison upon conviction.
- Third-degree arson would be charged if a fire damages or destroys other kinds of property, such as outbuildings, sheds, and vehicles.

MEDIA

INDEX-JOURNAL

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THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2016

DAILY 75¢, SUNDAY \$1.50

9 file on Day 1

By MATTHEW HENSLEY
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Nine candidates turned up at the Greenwood County elections office for the first day of filing.

At 12:08 p.m. Wednesday, clerk of court candidate Chastity Copeland was the first to file after the noon start to filing. Angie Woodhurst, the incumbent clerk of court, has not announced if she'll seek re-election. If Woodhurst runs, it could set the stage for a rematch between the two, who faced off in the 2012 election.

The race to be the Republican nominee for

Greenwood County sheriff is already filling up with three people filing to run Wednesday: incumbent Tony Davis, who is seeking a third term; Dale Kittles, who quit his position as captain in the sheriff's office to run against his former boss; and Dennis Kelly, a retired state trooper.

Three Republican councilmen filed to stay on County Council: Chuck Moates, who represents District 4; Steve Brown, who represents District 5 and currently serves as Council chairman; and Robbie Templeton, who represents District 6.

See FILE, page 4A



MATTHEW HENSLEY | INDEX-JOURNAL
Connie Moody, Greenwood County director of voter registration, left, speaks with Chastity Copeland while taking her paperwork to file to run for clerk of court. Copeland was the first to file after filing opened at noon Wednesday.

■ DUI ARREST

Prosecutor won't seek re-election

By MEG KINNARD
Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Recently charged with his third alcohol-related offense, longtime Lexington County prosecutor Donnie Myers announced Wednesday he is not seeking re-election to the office he's held for four decades.

"It has been an absolute privilege and pleasure serving as the Solicitor of the 11th Judicial Circuit of South Carolina for over 40 years," Myers, 70, said in a statement released by his office. "I will be forever grateful to the many people who have given me this highest honor and extend to all of you a wholehearted thank you."



DONNIE MYERS

Myers' current term expires in January, and he reaches mandatory retirement in December 2017. In his statement, he said voters should have the chance to pick his replacement in this fall's elections.

Primary election filing opened Wednesday. So far, one candidate submitted candidacy papers for Myers' job.

The announcement from the longtime prosecutor comes after calls for his resignation from officials, including Gov. Nikki Haley. Earlier this month, Haley said Myers and Richland County councilman Kelvin Washington should step down following separate drunken driving arrests, saying it's a problem when any elected official believes he or she is above the law.

Haley on Wednesday issued an executive order declaring Washington's seat vacant — a call made because of his recent guilty plea on tax charges, not the pending DUI charge. Haley took that step after seeking state prosecutors' advice on whether she could remove both Washington and Myers from office.

In Myers' case, Attorney General Alan Wilson's office advised that a DUI charge alone, even as a repeat offense, was not enough to warrant removal.

Just before his February arrest, Myers told a state trooper he had only one drink and was run off the road when his car crashed into a utility pole. Called to a wreck at around 8 p.m., the Highway Patrol found an empty car that smelled of alcohol and had a gun in the floorboard.

Troopers went to Myers' home, where he stumbled through the alphabet and other sobriety tests. He was taken to jail, where his blood alcohol level was tested as slightly higher than South Carolina's legal limit.

Myers, who first took office in 1976, pleaded guilty to drunken driving following an arrest near Asheville, North Carolina, in 2005, and served one year of probation.

SEEKING ANSWERS

Social justice group wants video from in-custody death probe

By DAMIAN DOMINGUEZ
ddominguez@indexjournal.com

A social justice group issued the first words spoken on behalf of the family of Demetric Cowan since the 38-year-old died while in law enforcement custody.

Cowan died Sunday morning while in custody at the Greenwood County Detention Center. The State Law Enforcement Division and the Greenwood County Coroner's Office are investigating his death.

His family reached out to Bruce Wilson, founder and CEO of the Greenville-based nonprofit group Fighting Injustice Together to discuss the death at a press conference Wednesday where the group asked that law enforcement release video of Cowan's arrest and booking.



DEMETRIC COWAN

More than 20 family members gathered behind Wilson at a lectern at the American Legion Post 224 at 1310 Cambridge Ave. E. Reporters stood before the group, cameras rolling and notes being taken as the family showed solidarity while Wilson addressed the media.

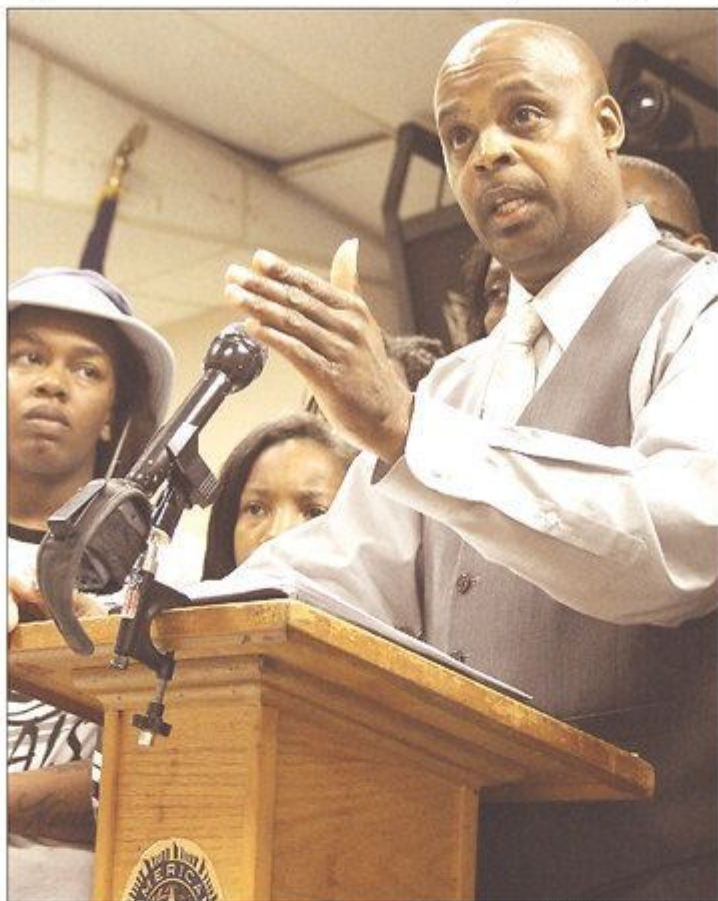
The family did not speak at the press conference and Wilson said the family asked for privacy while grieving.

"There are some things the family knows about this incident, and some things they don't," he said.

Cowan is survived by his widow and five children, ranging in ages from 9 to 20, and was active in his community, Wilson said.

"They also do know on Saturday morning," he said, "he was healthy and he was alive."

See ANSWERS, page 4A



MATTHEW HENSLEY | INDEX-JOURNAL

Bruce Wilson, founder and CEO of Fighting Injustice Together, speaks about Demetric Cowan's death at a press conference Wednesday while surrounded by Cowan's family.

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