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## **FYSA- Media Monitoring Report for DR 4241 SC 02/05/16**

# *NEWS CLIPS*

## SOUTH CAROLINA-DR-4241

Friday, February 05, 2016

### **Issues:**

- None.

### **Summary:**

- An editorial in The State urges local governments to apply for funds from the state's mitigation grant program to purchase flooded homes to protect lives and property from future disasters.
- A local journalist continues a series of personal articles that include the loss, and demolition, of the family's home in the historic flooding last year.
- The leader of a local homeless shelter---whose facility is at capacity---says a community-wide effort is needed to house families displaced by last year's flood.
- A local family's home was *not* flooded but still developed a persistent problem with mold.

### **Analysis:**

- None.

### **Political Commentary, Columns and Editorials**

**Editorial: Make Home Buyouts Part of Flood Recovery (The State)**

**Of Floods and Families Continues (The Columbia Star)**

## Floods

Effects of Flood Displaces Families, Highlights Housing Needs (WLTX-TV)

Warm Weather Could Be Causing Mold to Grow in Your Home (WLTX-TV)

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# Political Commentary, Columns and Editorials

## Editorial: Make Home Buyouts Part of Flood Recovery (The State)

Columbia (SC) State, February 4, 2016

AFTER FLOODING in May 2010 caused \$2 billion in damage to businesses and homes in and around Nashville, Tennessee, local leaders there took several steps to avoid a similar catastrophe. Under one program, city officials used federal emergency funds to buy more than 200 severely damaged houses in the most flood-prone areas.

Today, many homeowners across Richland and Lexington counties whose homes were damaged in October's historic flooding hope a similar program is offered here. We believe it should be.

Money for such a program could come from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Local officials in the two counties can apply for FEMA aid because President Obama declared many sections of South Carolina a federal disaster area after the early October floods. FEMA would pay for 75 percent of a recovery project, which means local governments must find the remaining 25 percent.

Richland County, the city of Columbia and Lexington County are leaning toward applying for the FEMA aid. One option for spending the money could be a home buyout program.

We understand — and expect — that local officials must carefully consider how to the money would be spent. The floods created widespread damage throughout the community. Sections of roads were washed away, and dozens of dams were broken. FEMA money could be sought for a wide range of projects.

But we think a key component of the region's efforts to avoid future flooding problems is a program to ensure people in the worst-hit areas do not move back in.

Some may oppose using government money to help people who bought homes near bodies of water and who did not buy flood insurance. That's a reasonable point of view. But by not helping people in the worst-hit areas, local officials encourage them to repair their homes and either move back in or sell the structures to other families.

Even if they purchase flood insurance for the new homes, the taxpayers will be on the hook if those neighborhoods are flooded again, because the federal government provides a huge subsidy for that program — perhaps too huge. More significantly, homeowners' lives once again would be endangered — as would be the lives of emergency responders, neighbors who try to help, and many others.

We still remember stories of people who suddenly found themselves stranded on rooftops or on the upper floors of their houses in the October floods. Many emergency responders and members of the public risked their lives to rescue those stranded residents and guide them to safety.

Now, many of those homeowners are trying to decide whether to repair their homes. One told The State that if he is offered a government buyout, he would not rebuild. He knows it could be 18 months before the FEMA money is available, but he's willing to wait if he knows the money will be coming.

In Nashville, local officials adopted a home buyout program soon after the floods hit. It helped those homeowners still paying off mortgages, and it helped everyone move on, officials said.

Richland and Lexington officials would have to work out details of a home buyout program, including who would be eligible and how much money is available. If FEMA money is used, those officials also would have to find the 25 percent match.

But any strategy for avoiding a repeat of the problems created in October must include removing houses from the most dangerous flood-prone areas. In the next flood, we prefer that weeds, grass and a few trees be washed away, not homes, lifetime possessions and, possibly, human lives.

## Of Floods and Families Continues (The Columbia Star)

By Cathy Cobbs

Columbia (SC) Star, February 5, 2016

**Editor's Note:** *This is the 13th in a series of articles by staff writer Cathy Cobbs chronicling her unique journey of the illness and death of her father and the loss of the family's home in the Great Flood of 2015. This week, she focuses on the demolition of her home.*

Every great beginning often starts with a difficult end. The end of our house was no exception.

After a long standoff with FEMA regarding grant money for bringing the house into compliance, there was a sudden breakthrough when our representative finally agreed to advance us 50 percent of the funds needed to raze it. At almost the same moment, my inbox beeped with the news that Carolina Wrecking had an unexpected opening in its demo calendar, and suddenly we went from 0 to 75 mph in our quest to tear down our existing home and build another one.

Through the magic of Facebook, we spread the word about our reverse garage sale, one in which we were practically paying anyone to take away items like shutters, light fixtures, sub-flooring, shelving, sinks, granite countertops, and toilets. As neighbors and charitable organizations showed up and stripped the house, it was extremely gratifying for us to know these items would be used and enjoyed by others instead of being scooped up and hauled to a landfill.

Also, on the advice of several friends, we decided to save the leaded glass and side transoms from our front door and incorporate them into the design of the new house. I communicated the request to remove the glass panes to our newly found handyman, and apparently wasn't clear enough about the instructions.

This faux pas became apparent at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday night when he delivered the entire door and its accompanying side windows to our rental house. Our house would spend its last 48 hours of existence with an eight-foot wide gaping hole at its entrance, which I had a very hard time accepting for some idiotic reason. "Should we put up some plywood?" I asked my husband, who answered, "Why, are you afraid someone is going to steal the fireplace?" So very true.

After several more stressful incidents (including a "whisper-scream" conversation with SCE&G about the company's failure to take out our gas line when it was requested—quickly resolved by an understanding customer service rep whom I believe was afraid about my mental health), we were set for D-day, tentatively scheduled for 8:30 a.m. Monday. I ordered donuts and coffee, and my neighbor graciously set up a table across the street for anyone who cared to join me in what some told me was a "sick activity, even for you."

Anyone who has read this column would deduce quite quickly my sense of timing has been askew during these last few months—the decision to leave my car at home and fly to Dayton when my father first got desperately ill, the conviction I didn't need to be present when he passed away, the thousands and thousands of dollars we spent drying out our house, only to decide we needed to start from scratch—each of them fell under that category of "seemed like a good idea at the time," but in hindsight, were just wrong, wrong, wrong.

So why should I have been surprised my well-laid goodbye plans went south pretty quickly? I left early Monday, with the idea I would do a final walk-through and recall fond memories of the times we enjoyed in each room. Then I would gently close the door (wait, scratch that), take my place across the street, wipe away my lady-like tears, and give the workers a gentle nod to go ahead with the first strike.

When I pulled up to the house at 8:10 a.m., half the garage was missing already, the excavator was taking huge bites out of the roof, and there were six giant trucks lined up on Forest Ridge Drive waiting their turn to carry off the debris.

So much for that tender scenario. Instead, I ate several decadent cream-filled donuts, then recorded videos and sent them to our daughter with captions like, "There goes your room." Sometimes when sentimentality is thwarted, sarcasm works.

I was extremely grateful for the many neighbors and friends who dropped by to keep me company while the demo was occurring. I finally dragged myself away a couple of hours later when the main structure was down. My husband, who is a normal person, met me at the house at happy hour, when it was all over, and we toasted to our future while standing in the hole that symbolized our past.

It was a good day.

## Floods

### Effects of Flood Displaces Families, Highlights Housing Needs (WLTX-TV)

Janae Frazier, WLTX 8:28 p.m. EST February 4, 2016

Columbia, SC (WLTX) - It's been four months since flood waters devastated the Midlands and we're still feeling the impact of the damage.

Leaders at St. Lawrence Place, which is a homeless shelter for families say the flood has displaced families.

"In my tenure this is the first time that we've had a natural disaster that has affected us in this way. You know we can look at data, and we can see peaks, for example the recession where we know job loss has done this families, but we

have never seen one day where the phones just started ringing, where we just had people coming in off the streets asking for help,” President and CEO of St. Lawrence Place and Trinity Housing Corporation Lila Anna Sauls said.

LaTonya Johnson and her two children are one of those displaced families.

Johnson moved from Alabama to South Carolina for a human resources job, but before she even started the job, she lost it.

The flood damaged the company she was supposed to work at and left her and her two children homeless.

“I really, really never thought this would happen to me because you see it all the time, but I never was like okay I’m going to be one of those people that get affected by something so traumatically, like it just stops my world, like I never thought that,” Johnson explained.

“What we’re seeing now is an urgency. We do have families living in cars who have been displaced. We are at maximum capacity. We have 60 who have been accepted and are waiting in line. So you know as a community we have to face this issue,” Sauls added.

Johnson and her two kids are staying at St. Lawrence Place until she can get financially stable. Johnson is currently working at a bank but is making plans to get her nursing license and then wants to buy a house for her and her family.

Although it’s not the move she thought she’d have, she’s staying positive through all of it.

“It is tough and is nerve-wracking trying to figure out okay when is this going to be my last day or when is that, you know worry about your kids, you just have to keep your head up and stay strong and just push forward,” Johnson said.

Sauls is passionate about the work of her organization and believes that homelessness among families can only be solved through a major effort by the community.

“Ninety-seven percent of our families will graduate and go on to their own permanent housing. While they’re with us, we believe in working with the whole family,” Sauls explained.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.stlawrenceplace.org/>

## **Warm Weather Could Be Causing Mold to Grow in Your Home (WLTX-TV)**

**Sonia Gutierrez**, WLTX 11:35 a.m. EST February 5, 2016

West Columbia, SC (WLTX) - Mold is everywhere. The question is, how much of it becomes a problem?

Although October's floodwaters didn't invade the home of Maria Montes back in October, the mold sure did.

She had no idea the health, cleaning and landlord issues it would cause her.

"I was really shocked when I saw all the windows and around the beds. When I started seeing [my room] and under my bed, I could not believe it" said Montes.

She's been living in a home with mold all over her bedrooms, bathroom and kitchen.

She first notified Red Oak Management in November. They cleaned up and painted but in January the mold reappeared.

"We have done everything in our power to accommodate her and help her" said Danielle Rodgers, the property manager in charge with Outlandis Corporation.

Trey Manning, a mold expert with Environmental Mold Solutions, says mold can sometimes look like dirt and

misdiagnosis can happen.

"So we came out and took some samples took it to the lab and indeed it was mold" said Manning.

"She had water underneath her house and people don't realize how much water will travel through almost anything and it will travel in any direction. When we come into the spring season when temperatures warm up I think people are going to start to notice it more then" said Manning.

Mold can take many forms and colors, Manning says the worst is black mold.

"It will exasperate, so the sooner you deal with it the better off you're going to be" said Manning.

Maria is a single mother of four kids. One of her sons got sick after the cleaning, "my boy with asthma cannot be in here or around that; it's bad enough with the mold but with the smell inside it's really bad," said Montes.

She told News19 she was also suffering from headaches.

Dr. Greg Black is an asthma consultant with Palmetto Health and says mold doesn't pose any direct health risks to the average person.

"Ultimately, it doesn't injure them, they just have to avoid it" said Black.

"If you do see a lot of black mold in one particular place is because the more mold you have, it seeks to defend itself by releasing mycotoxins. Mycotoxins people cannot be allergic to but they can cause shortness of breath, it can cause headache, it can cause cough," said Black.

Nobody is going to be immediately injured by it but nobody will be healthy with it either.

"Some of these conditions would be unlivable because you probably won't have good sleep, you probably will always have some cough, you probably will always have some nasal congestion," said Black.

Bleach cleaning doesn't always work.

"On a hard surface you can remove it. Literally, you could use some Lysol soap and water and wipe it up if it's on a hard surface like metal. When you're dealing with a home such as this you have dry wall, you have wood that's not treated, unfinished," said Manning, "The root of that mold digs into the wood and you have to get that root out."

If you see ten square feet or less of mold you can clean it yourself but if it's 100 square feet Manning says it's time to find a professional.

"When you have beds and things like that, you have a lot of humidity in the house and the bed is close to the wall it can't get any air flow so that's where you'll see the mold a lot of times or like in closets" said Manning.

"We bleached the walls with Clorox, we treated the carpets with a mold mildew remover and we treated the walls with a mold mildew remover" said Rodgers, who manages the property and says they were out here as soon as they got a written request last month.

"We just want to see her in a good living environment for her and her kids" said Rodgers.

Outlandis Corporation told Maria they'll move her to a new location while her home is being fixed.