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Subject: Morning Clips – Friday, December 19, 2014

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

Rock Hill Herald: S.C. Gov. Haley raises concerns over Giti Tire tariff

http://www.heraldonline.com/2014/12/18/6639144_sc-gov-haley-raises-concerns-over.html?rh=1

Don Worthington

New tariffs placed by the U.S. Department of Commerce on tires manufactured in China – including those made by Giti Tire – have raised concerns in South Carolina. Gov. Nikki Haley wants commerce department officials to reconsider the 17.69 percent tariff targeted for Giti, which plans to build a plant in Chester County.

Note: Haley, in a Tuesday letter, said the tariff “inequitably affects Giti’s business.”

Note: Chaney Adams, Haley’s press secretary, said Thursday, “Governor Haley has always said we have to take care of our businesses and workers, Giti is a company that will take care of a lot of our families, and so when she became aware of the tariff situation, it was important to her to contact the Obama administration directly.”

Associated Press: Haley announces Dept. of Administration secretary

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=ufg4fSJo

Seanna Adcox

Gov. Nikki Haley announced Thursday that the director of the agency that handles much of state government’s bureaucracy will be South Carolina’s first Department of Administration secretary. Haley named Marcia Adams to lead the agency that officially won’t exist until July 1. It will be South Carolina’s 17th Cabinet agency.

The State: First director named for new SC agency

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/12/18/3881636/first-director-named-for-new-sc.html>

Andrew Shain

Marcia Adams, head of the soon-to-close agency that oversees much of S.C. state government operations, was named Thursday as the first director of the state’s new Department of Administration. Gov. Nikki Haley, to whom the new agency will report, appointed Adams to the post.

Note: “This is the one position that I am not the slightest bit nervous about,” Haley said. “I have seen her in action. I know what she thinks. We’re looking at a good finance person that understands this is all about making the lives of every agency easier and reducing the dollars of every taxpayer in South Carolina.”

WSPA: SC Lawmakers Looking at Several Options to Pay for Roads

<http://www.wspa.com/story/27665725/sc-lawmakers-looking-at-several-options-to-pay-for-roads>

Robert Kittle

Since finding a way to pay for South Carolina’s road and bridge needs is a top priority for state lawmakers, they’re looking at several different options for doing that. One bill prefiled in the House would raise the current \$300 sales tax cap on vehicles up to \$750, with the additional money going to roads and bridges.

Note: There has been talk about raising the state’s gas tax, which is about 16 cents a gallon, fourth-lowest in the nation. But Gov. Nikki Haley has said she’ll veto any tax increase. Because of that, some lawmakers area talking about having a referendum to let voters have a say in whether to raise the gas tax.

Rock Hill Herald: Election board order new Chester County election

<http://www.heraldonline.com/2014/12/18/6636771/election-board-issues-order-for.html>

Bristow Marchant

The State Election Commission has formally overturned last month’s election for Chester County supervisor, another step toward scheduling a new election. Shane Stuart, a petition candidate for county supervisor, filed an appeal after he lost to incumbent Carlisle Roddey by 230 votes.

Note: A date for the new election will be set by Gov. Nikki Haley within 75 to 90 days – which likely would schedule the election in February or March. She has 10 days to issue an order doing so.

Opinion / Editorial Roundup:

Greenville News: Further computer delay isn't acceptable

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/opinion/editorials/2014/12/18/editorial-computer-delay-acceptable/20594029/>

Editorial

At the rate South Carolina is going it may have its long-delayed computer system for child support enforcement up and running in time for the 50th anniversary of the 1988 federal law that required fully automated computer systems for child support enforcement.

Post and Courier: The seawall fine, rapidly eroding

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20141219/PC1002/141219400>

Editorial

The Wild Dunes Ocean Club Villas property owners' association caught a break on the fine for an illegal sea wall. Indeed, the record \$749,000 fine issued by environmental regulators was cut by more than \$630,000 by the Department of Health and Environmental Control board last week. That reduction had to be some kind of record as well.

The State: Columbia, SC officials, must keep cost of baseball park in check

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/12/18/3881810/editorial-columbia-sc-officials.html>

Editorial

CONSTRUCTION hasn't even begun on Columbia's city-owned baseball stadium planned for the proposed Bull Street development, and the price tag already has risen. In announcing that the stadium's cost had increased by \$2 million — from \$35 million to \$37 million — Mayor Steve Benjamin said taxpayers wouldn't be asked to dole out any more cash to meet the need.

Island Packet: Public gets shut out by Jasper County board

<http://www.islandpacket.com/2014/12/18/3495510/pubilc-gets-shut-out-by-jasper.html?sp=/99/342/1750/>

Editorial

The Jasper County school board flunked again this year when it labeled its superintendent "above average," even though student performance has been anything but. The district has not improved its "at risk" rating on state report cards since 2009 and in October received its third consecutive "F" grade on federal report cards.

Post and Courier: Cyber war poses real threat

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20141219/PC1002/141219399>

Editorial

It started as little more than a quirky "truth is stranger than fiction" news brief. After the first trailer hit the Internet over the summer, North Korea called "The Interview," a comedy starring James Franco and Seth Rogen, an "act of terrorism." Leader Kim Jong Un threatened retaliation if it was released in theaters.

S.C. General Assembly News:

Associated Press: Senators: Forgiving loans could net more SC teachers

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=2S5uZLlp

Seanna Adcox

South Carolina could recruit and keep more good teachers by forgiving student loans, paying teacher mentors a stipend and boosting some teachers' salaries, a Senate study panel says. Its leader, Sen. Wes Hayes, said Wednesday the state should focus such initiatives in rural districts where it's particularly hard to fill classrooms with high-quality teachers.

The State: SC House bill aims to protect whistle-blowers

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/12/19/3882410/sc-house-bill-aims-to-protect.html>

Cassie Cope

Nearly a quarter of the 82 bills pre-filed Thursday in the S.C. House of Representatives centered on ethics, including a proposal to strengthen the state's whistleblower law. The proposal would remove the \$2,000 cap on a reward that whistleblowers could receive and eliminate the \$15,000 cap on legal fees.

South Carolina News:

The State: 'Work Ready' counties give SC an edge in industrial recruiting, pols say

http://www.thestate.com/2014/12/18/3881983_work-ready-counties-give-sc-an.html?rh=1#storylink=cpy

Kristy Eppley Rupon

A "work ready" certification for nearly half of the counties in South Carolina could mean more jobs for the state. Twenty-two of the state's 46 counties have met specific standards for certification through the South Carolina Work Ready Communities initiative, Lt. Gov. Yancey McGill and Lt. Gov.-elect Henry McMaster announced during a press conference Thursday.

Times and Democrat: Bamberg, other counties certified as 'work ready'

http://thetandd.com/business/bamberg-other-counties-certified-as-work-ready/article_ac34f45e-8740-11e4-9202-9bf334247611.html

Nearly half of South Carolina's counties are now certified as work ready, outpacing the nation in an initiative that showcases the highly skilled workforce that businesses require, Lt. Gov. Yancey McGill and Lt. Gov.-Elect Henry McMaster announced Thursday.

Post and Courier: ACT testing contract to be ended after one year, official rules

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20141218/PC1603/141219411>

Jeremy Borden

South Carolina officials erred in their award of a five-year contract to Iowa-based ACT Inc. to provide new statewide exams, and the contract will expire after one year, Michael Spicer, the state's chief procurement officer, ruled Thursday. The state had awarded a \$58 million contract to ACT, most commonly known for its college entrance exam, for new tests in English and math for grades 3-8.

Index-Journal: Scott: education and staying positive the keys to success

<http://www.indexjournal.com/news/Scott--education-and-staying-positive-the-keys-to-success>

U.S. Sen. Tim Scott, R-S.C., heard about the achievements of McCormick High School's students and had to learn about them for himself. Scott, the highest member of the federal government to visit the school, spoke to a select group of students Thursday morning in the media center.

The State: USC Professor: Prosecutor should appeal judge's Stinney ruling

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/12/18/3882026/usc-professor-prosecutor-should.html>

John Monk

But a criminal law professor at the University of South Carolina School of Law said there can be great value in an appeal by 3rd Circuit Solicitor Ernest "Chip" Finney III – especially if the S.C. Supreme Court were to uphold the ruling that the young black teen was wrongly tried and executed in connection with the bludgeoning deaths of two white girls.

Local News:

Post and Courier: Charleston County School Board to move ahead with national search for superintendent

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20141218/PC16/141219395>

Amanda Kerr

The Charleston County School Board announced Thursday it will move forward next year with a national search for a new superintendent following a closed-door meeting where the group discussed the details of former Superintendent Nancy McGinley's resignation.

Hartsville Messenger: Darlington County Councilman explains close job offer vote; candidate interested

http://www.snow.com/messenger/article_df6ac2ba-8720-11e4-ae4a-2b8955c1f603.html

Jim Faile

After a 4-3 vote by the Darlington County Council to offer Jon Caime of Seneca the county's top job, a dissenting council member said the "no" votes were intended as protests against the process rather than the candidate. In the meantime, Caime described a great potential for growth in the county and hinted he might be prepared to accept the offer.

Sun News: Family, residents mark year anniversary since Heather Elvis disappeared

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/2014/12/18/4678026/family-residents-mark-year-anniversary.html?>

<sp=/99/134/142/>

Tonya Root

The family of Heather Elvis lit candles held by dozens of community members Thursday to symbolically give back to the people who have given them so much during the year since their daughter disappeared. During the more than two hour vigil held at Peachtree boat landing Thursday night, praise and worship music was played by a band, a sideshow of photos showing the 20-year-old as a child and young woman rotated on a screen and community members offered prayers.

The State: Koon enters Lexington County sheriff's race

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/12/18/3881694/koon-enters-lexington-county-sheriffs.html>

Tim Flach

Assistant Lexington police chief Jay Koon is seeking to return to the law enforcement agency he just left as boss. Koon, 42, announced Thursday that he will run for Lexington County sheriff next spring. It came on the day he rejoined town police as its second-in-command after serving as a temporary top aide to interim Sheriff A. Lewis McCarty for five months.

National News:

Wall Street Journal: Amid Warren's Rise, a Democratic Split Becomes Apparent

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/amid-warrens-rise-a-democratic-split-becomes-apparent-1418936408>

Peter Nicholas

Democrats looking for a way forward after their election losses this year have wound up in a debate over how best to frame the party's economic message, with the most liberal members rallying behind Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D., Mass.) and her calls for a focus on income inequality.

New York Times: Obama Intends to Lift Several Restrictions Against Cuba on His Own

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/19/us/politics/obama-intends-to-lift-several-restrictions-against-cuba-on-his-own.html?partner=rss&emc=rss&_r=0

Julie Hirschfeld Davis, Michael R. Gordon

President Obama will move as soon as next month to defang the 54-year-old American trade embargo against Cuba, administration officials said Thursday, using broad executive power to defy critics in Congress and lift restrictions on travel, commerce and financial activities.

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