

Lexington
County
Chronicle
Lexington, SC
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148+188 Sheriff's election starts new era

BY HAL MILLARD
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A new era in Lexington County law enforcement is about to take shape.

Voters will make one last trip to the polls on Tuesday, April 21 to select their new Sheriff.

Their choice is simple. Jay Koon is the only name on the ballot and no known write-in candidates are expected to challenge.

Polls countywide will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Though Koon is urging voters to get out and vote, county elections chief Dean Crepes is expecting a turnout of only 6 to 8%.

The assistant police chief in Lexington will take over from interim Sheriff Lewis McCarty, who was appointed to the office last June by Gov. Nikki Haley following a 10-count federal indictment against legendary Sheriff James Metts.

Metts, who stepped down in December and pleaded guilty to one of the charges against him, is scheduled to be sentenced on April 27 and will likely serve at least some jail

time for his crime after a storied 42-year career.

In an interview days after his overwhelming March primary win, Koon said he is using his time before taking office to formulate a command team, plan a transition strategy, and start the healing after a tumultuous 10 months.

"We're where we need to be," he said. "When all is said and done, we'll have the best and brightest team and you won't see a lot of changes. We'll be heading in the right direction. There's a good group over there."

While at the Lexington Police Department, Koon spent five months on loan to interim Sheriff McCarty, whom Koon affectionately calls "the gold standard of law enforcement." While there, Koon became intimately familiar with the workings of the department and county jail, an apprenticeship that should serve him well, he said.

"That time was very valuable to me," he said. "Until you get inside the walls of an organization, under the hood, you don't really see what it's all about.

There's lots of moving parts inside those walls."

Koon said his administration would adhere to his campaign pledge of "fair enforcement of the law, honest government officials, and safer neighborhoods."

He added: "We've still got to punch the ticket on the 21st, but we need to start getting ready to hit the floor running..."

The responsibility "will be huge, but I think we're prepared for it."

Koon said the county is diverse and will require a proactive Sheriff focused on the unique needs of various parts of the county.

"You can't sit behind a desk and say this is going to be our plan; you can't have a cookie-cutter program," he said. "You have to get in those pockets, those communities and say, what are your issues, what are your problems, and tell the officers in those areas to tailor their strategies to that."

"I think the agency and the community is ready to heal and move forward into the future."

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148 Chatman named Bamberg County Economic Ambassador



Pictured: South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley, Robert Chatman and Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt.

At a statewide reception held at the Governor's Mansion on April 2, Robert Chatman was honored by Governor Nikki Haley, Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt and the South Carolina Department of Commerce as the 2015 South Carolina Economic Ambassador for Bamberg County.

For the past 10 years, Chatman has served as Chairman of the Lower Savannah Council of Governments' development corporation, making low interest economic development loans and providing much needed infrastructure support for start-up companies in the Southern Carolina region. Mr. Chatman has also represented Bamberg County on the Bamberg County Economic Development

Commission and is an advisory board member of the Southern Carolina Alliance.

As a retired educator, Mr. Chatman has also taken an interest in workforce training and has routinely provided youth with interview skills coaching.

In addition, Mr. Chatman has been involved with the planning of Bamberg's speculative building program as well as assisting with the planning and refurbishment of a number of Bamberg County industrial buildings.

"As a life-long resident of Denmark and a member of the Bamberg Economic Development Commission, Robert has been an important player in bringing these economic development projects

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Economic Ambassador

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to fruition," said Bamberg County Economic Development Project Manager Kell Anderson.

According to Southern Carolina Alliance Chairman Johnny Williamson, "Robert is one of those Bamberg County community leaders whose support of economic

development has been invaluable in bringing jobs to our area, and we are pleased to see him honored in this way."

"We're honored to spotlight these individuals for their contributions to our state. South Carolina's people are what truly make our state one of the best places in the world to do business, and events like

yesterday's ceremony give us the opportunity to recognize just some of the people that help make South Carolina so special," said Gov. Nikki Haley on the morning after the ceremony.

For more information on Bamberg County or Southern Carolina Alliance, visit: www.southerncarolina.org.

¹⁴⁸ Spearman urges preparation for new ACT tests

From release

State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman called on teachers, parents, and students to prepare for the new timed ACT tests that will be administered across the State April 28-30.



Spearman

"I am proud of the innovation and collaboration I have seen during my visits to schools throughout South Carolina," said Spearman. "We are fostering a culture of teamwork and a love of learning, and I want to encourage everyone to keep up the great work."

"This month, we're administering ACT Aspire to all students in grades three

through eight. For students in the 11th grade, they will take a college readiness exam and a workforce readiness test: The ACT and WorkKeys. These exams will provide important feedback to teachers and parents in the areas students are strong in, and areas where they need support. For high school students, WorkKeys will show them if they have the foundational skills that leaders in the business community want from their employees. Governor Nikki Haley, our Department of Commerce, members of the General Assembly, and business men and women from around the state have done a wonderful job recruiting industry to South Carolina. We are creating thousands of good-paying jobs. WorkKeys is an indicator of whether our high school students are ready to take

on these highly-skilled positions.

"I am proud to launch a public service announcement video this week. We have created a Web page with resources for parents and students, and we are using social media to spread awareness about these new tests. I encourage all parents and students to study, work hard, and prepare for these new, timed tests.

"I am also taking this opportunity to evaluate the testing requirements in South Carolina. I agree that we need accountability and tests. However, I also believe that it's time to evaluate what kinds of tests we're giving to students – and more importantly – how many, so we can develop a fair system that balances the need for testing with a passion for learning," concluded Spearman.

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148 Call 811 before you dig

South Carolina 811 has announced results from a recent survey that found nearly half (45 percent) of American homeowners who plan to dig this year for projects like landscaping, installing a fence or mailbox, or building a deck, pond or patio, will put themselves and their communities at risk by not calling 811 at least three full business days beforehand to learn the approximate location of underground utilities. Extrapolated to the full population of U.S. homeowners, approximately 38.6 million people will dig this year without first having underground utility lines marked.

The national public opinion survey of 646 homeowners, conducted Feb. 25-March 1, 2015, also found that 79 percent of those who plan to dig believe that something negative – such as a service interruption, bodily harm or financial ramifications – could occur if they were to dig without knowing the location of underground utilities.

An underground utility line is damaged once every six minutes nationwide because someone decided to dig without first calling 811, according to data collected by Common Ground Alliance (CGA), the national organization dedicated to protecting underground utility lines and the safety of people who dig near them. Digging without knowing the approximate location of underground utilities can result in damage to gas, electric, communications, water and sewer lines, which can lead to service disruptions, serious injuries and costly repairs.

"The results of the survey are troubling because the math doesn't add up in safety's favor," said Misty Wise, Executive Director of South Carolina 811. "As do-it-yourselfers plan gardening and home improvement projects this spring, we are reminding South Carolina residents that striking underground utilities is a serious concern and can cause not only inconvenient service outages for entire communities, but even bodily harm in worst-case scenarios. A free call or click to have underground utility lines marked before digging reduces the likelihood of an incident occurring to just 1 percent."

Everyone who calls South Carolina 811 at 811 at least three full business days before digging is connected to South Carolina's one-call notification center, which will take the caller's information and communicate it to local member utility companies. Professional locators will then visit the dig site to mark the approximate location of underground utility lines with spray paint, flags or both. Once a site has been accurately marked, it is safe to begin digging around the marked areas.

To help put its free service even more at the fingertips of South Carolinians, South Carolina 811 launched a new mobile app in February for users to request that buried utilities be located, check on the status of their request, report damages and access information about South Carolina law. The app is available to Android users and will soon be available for Apple devices.

Gov. Nikki Haley is among the more than 30 governors proclaiming April as National Safe Digging Month in an effort to bring extra attention to the issue of underground utility line safety and reduce the risk of unnecessary infrastructure damage. As part of National Safe Digging Month, South Carolina 811 encourages homeowners to take the following steps when planning a digging project this spring:

- Always contact South Carolina 811 by calling 811, submitting a request online at www.sc811.com or through the South Carolina 811 mobile app at least three full business days before digging, regardless of the depth or familiarity with the property.
- Plan ahead. Notify South Carolina 811 on Monday or Tuesday for work planned for an upcoming weekend, providing ample time for the approximate location of lines to be marked.
- Confirm that all lines have been marked.
- Learn what the various colors of paint and flags represent.



Title: **Poultry Festival Steering Committee meets with Governor Haley and Representative Kenn**

Author:

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Poultry Festival Steering Committee meets with Governor Haley and Representative Kennedy

This past Friday, select members of the SC Poultry Festival met with Governor Nikki Haley in her State House office. The committee presented Governor Haley and members of her staff with several baskets of delicious Shealy's fried chicken, and other poultry festival memorabilia. Governor Haley and her staff were personally invited to attend this week's festivities at the 29th SC Poultry Festival, as the festival is one of the largest family friendly weekend events in South Carolina. Many thanks to Representative Kennedy, who arranged the meeting with our Governor; word from the Governor's staff is that all greatly enjoyed the goody baskets and a number plan to attend the festival this weekend. Thanks also go out to the unselfish work of all the festival committee members, who make this wonderful event possible each year.

Pictured above are: Steering Committee members, Brent Shealy and Kimberly Caughman, Representative Ralph Kennedy and Governor Nikki Haley, Committee members Michael Shealy and Byron Sheppard.

Title: **Health care regulations are worth state's review**

Author:

Size: 48.98 square inch

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EDITORIAL

Health care regulations are worth state's review

The state's health care regulations have seemingly been in limbo for years. In particular, the state's Certificate of Need law, one of the most pertinent health care stipulations in the state that essentially dictates how hospitals can operate, is way too malleable and should either be properly enforced, revised or abolished.

The S.C. House made steps in one of those directions last Wednesday by approving a bill that would make it easier to build and expand hospitals and other medical facilities, and would end the oversight program entirely at the start of 2018.

Lingering questions over this issue have at least in part given way to University Hospital in Augusta seeking the construction of a 50-bed facility in Aiken at the cost of about \$53 million.

Other states, including Georgia, have similar Certificate of Need laws in place that are aimed at restricting the overbuilding of costly medical services and assuring that services are located so that everyone can use them.

However, questions continue to exist as to how effective the program has been, and lawmakers are clearly still trying to figure out the best way forward. The House bill passed with an overwhelming margin of 103-1. S.C. Rep. Bill Taylor, R-Aiken, noted that he felt the Certificate of Need program no longer ensures better health care in South Carolina due to the state government picking "winners and losers in granting" the certificate of needs.

He added that the phasing out of the program also opens the door to the addition of much-needed nursing home beds in Aiken County – a measure he hopes encourages nursing homes to locate to eastern Aiken County to serve the Wagener area.

However, supporters of the Certificate of Need program say it helps to save money by ensuring unnecessary medical services are not duplicated in communities. In the end, policy makers in the state just need to come to a concrete, straightforward decision about its future. Too much confusion reigns right now to allow for solid footing in the health care industry.

Republican S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley is certainly not a fan of the regulation. In 2013, she vetoed money that the state's Department of Health and Environmental Control used to process applications for the program. Lawmakers didn't override that veto, and the department subsequently suspended the program. However, the South Carolina Supreme Court ruled that although Haley's veto meant the program was not funded, state law still states that the program must be administered, with or without funding.

What the state doesn't need is a program that's too up in the air to be effective. At the very least, it's positive to see lawmakers discussing the issue and trying to provide a greater sense of clarity.

Title: **Health care regulations are worth state's review**

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AP FILE PHOTO

S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley has previously attempted to abolish a program known as the Certificate of Need requirement, but a state Supreme Court decision reversed that policy choice.

Title: **Haley blasts Republicans**
 Author: BY BILL BARROW Associated Press
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Haley blasts Republicans

BY BILL BARROW
Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Gov. Nikki Haley has launched a new offensive against state lawmakers, using the podium at the South Carolina Republican Party Convention to blast GOP lawmakers as insufficiently conservative on taxes, debt and other issues.

Her specific complaints were last year's failed proposal for a legislative pay raise and this year's pitch for a \$500 million bond issue for public projects, along with pending proposals to raise gas taxes to pay for road construction. Haley said all three pursuits violate Republican principles.

"At a time when presidential candidates are going to be coming through South Carolina, how do we hold our head up when all year, I've been fighting with my own Republicans," she said. "I've been fighting my own people. These are the people who are supposed to be with me. These are the people who are



AP PHOTO/RICHARD SHIRO, FILE

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley delivers her State of the State address to the joint session of the legislature, at the Statehouse in Columbia. Haley has launched a new offensive against state lawmakers, using the podium at the South Carolina Republican Party Convention to blast GOP lawmakers as insufficiently conservative on taxes, debt and other issues.

supposed to be moving South Carolina forward, and every day I've been fighting my own Republicans."

Delegates cheered her address, but some lawmakers in attendance were visibly perturbed during the speech.

Afterward, one Republican

House leader said he didn't want to respond in kind. "The mudslinging is not who I am, so it's better for me not to say anything that adds to the divide," said Assistant Majority Whip Samuel Rivers Jr., who represents parts of Berkeley and Charleston counties.

Title: **Bills to help vets education, retirement**
 Author: BY DERREK ASBERRY clasherry@aikenstandard.com
 Size: 38.59 square inch
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Bills to help vets education, retirement

General Assembly passes S.391, heads to Governor Nikki Haley's desk

BY DERREK ASBERRY

dasberry@aikenstandard.com

One of two S.C. bills that will benefit veterans' education and retirement made it to Gov. Nikki Haley's desk this week after being passed by both bodies of the General Assembly. The other is expected to pass once the state government returns later this year from recess.

The General Assembly passed S.391 – a bill that allows veterans using the GI Bill to attend colleges in South Carolina without having to pay out-of-state tuition if they do not meet the residency requirements.

Sen. Tom Young, R-Aiken, said constituents contacted him in 2013 about veterans' education issues.

Veterans currently do not have that ability, and Young said the extra expense with out-of-state tuition causes some to decide not to attend or to defer

enrollment. In addition, the GI bill covers the cost of in-state tuition, but doesn't cover the difference in out-of-state fees and tuition.

Young said he worked on legislation last year with the Aiken-Augusta Warrior Project and other veterans in the community.

"Passage of the bill will ensure that South Carolina is now in compliance with the federal requirement related to veterans using post-9/11 GI Bill benefits," he said.

David Lobb, the vice president for legislative affairs with the state's Military Officers Association of America, said passage of the bill finally gets South Carolina up to date with federal requirements.

"It took the state so long to come in compliance with fed-

eral law, so I'm glad this bill finally passed," Lobb said.

Another bill, H.3147, seeks to attract military retirees who will complement the workforce with special skills, according to Rep. Bill Taylor, who described it as simply a "jobs bill."

The Aiken Republican said the bill also would phase in the elimination of the state income tax on veterans' retirement benefits attributable to their military service over three years. He added that retired military, ages 65 and older, may deduct retirement income of up to \$15,000 per year, while taxpayers under age 65 may deduct retirement income up to \$3,000 per year.

"By reducing the state tax burden on retired veterans South Carolina would be more competitive with other states,

such as Florida and Texas, that have no state income tax," he said.

The bill was passed by the House Ways & Means Committee last week and Tuesday

by the full House. Taylor said it will be now be up to the Senate.

"It's estimated that this legislation, if passed and fully implemented, would save our retired veterans \$30 million dollars in state taxes annually," Taylor said.

Derrek Asberry is the SRS beat reporter for the *Aiken Standard* and has been with the paper since June 2013. He is originally from Vidalia, Ga., and a graduate of Georgia Southern University. Follow him on Twitter @DerrekAsberry.



Haley



Young

Title: **PGA Championship returning to Kiawah**
 Author: BY PETE IACOBELLI Associated Press
 Size: 48.05 square inch
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PGA Championship returning to Kiawah

BY PETE IACOBELLI

Associated Press

KIAWAH ISLAND — The PGA Championship is returning to the Ocean Course in 2021, three decades after the seaside layout made its debut at the 1991 Ryder Cup.

This will be the second time Pete Dye's course has hosted golf's final major — in 2012, Rory McIlroy won by eight shots.

The course was commissioned specifically for the Ryder Cup, and Bernhard Langer's missed par putt lifted the U.S. to victory in the "War at the Shore."

But the course's difficulty and harsh seaside winds kept major events away from the barrier island for the next few years. After some alterations by Dye through the years, the PGA of America brought its signature event to the Ocean Course three years ago.

"I think it's a great, fair test of golf for the best players in the world who were there in 2012 and will be back in 2021," Kerry Haigh, the PGA of America's chief championship officer, said Friday.

While the golf was magnificent, the logistics of moving people on and off the seaside island near Charleston was not as smooth. Shuttles for fans and media from downtown Charleston took up to 90 minutes to make the 40-mile trip. A parking field turned to muck after a Saturday rainstorm, making it near impossible for people to leave the area in a timely fashion.

Kiawah Island Golf Resort President Roger Warren acknowledged the missteps and vowed to fix them in time for 2021.

Parking "didn't meet our standards," Warren said. "Our goal is to improve and

fix that so it doesn't become the issue that people talk about."

Part of the solution, Warren said, will be relocating parking areas further from the island and using shuttles to bring more fans to the course, hopefully, easing congestion entering the island. He also wants people

who bus in from Charleston to understand that it's not a quick trip.

"We need a better plan and we're going to have a better plan," he said.

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, sitting alongside Warren, said she has spoken with Kiawah Island leaders about how state leaders can help.

The tournament, the governor said, generated \$75 million in advertising for South Carolina. PGA of America President Derek Sprague added the 2012 tournament had an economic impact of \$193 million on the state.

"South Carolinians love their golf," Haley said.

Haigh said organizers again planned to limit spectators, as they did in 2012, because of the location. Three years ago, access was limited to about 27,000 people each

day, including competitors, support personnel, media and spectators. In 2009, Hazeltine National in Minnesota had about 44,000 people each

round.

Dye said he expected no changes to the course in the next six years.

"It's OK with me," he said.

The Ocean Course has had an up-and-down history with professional golf. After the splashy, Ryder Cup debut, pros were deterred by the strong winds, fast greens and tricky layout. It served as the misty backdrop for "The Legend of Bagger Vance," the 2000 movie directed by Robert Redford.

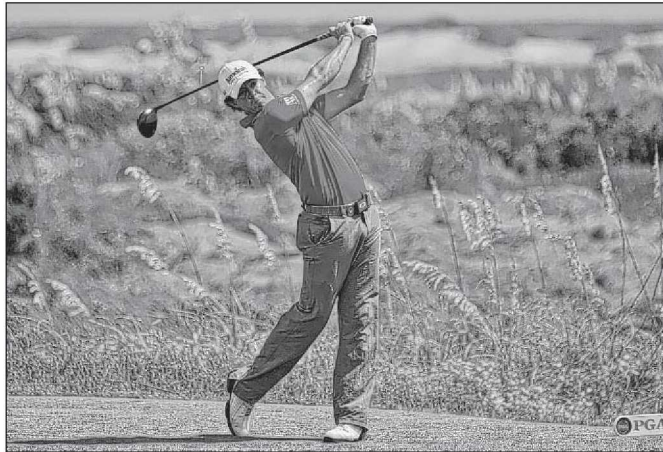
The course hosted the Senior PGA Championship in 2007 before entertaining the world's best golfers five years later at the PGA.

McIlroy devoured the competition, finishing eight shots ahead of runner-up David Lynn to break Jack Nicklaus' mark for margin of victory at the PGA Championship.

Haigh said the feedback from pros was strong after 2012.

"Why would we not come back to this wonderful venue," he said.

Title: **PGA Championship returning to Kiawah**
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AP PHOTO/EVAN VUCCI, FILE

The PGA Championship is returning to the Ocean Course in 2021.

Title: **Haley's list prompts pushback from GOP lawmakers**
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Haley's list prompts pushback from GOP lawmakers

By TIM SMITH

The Greenville News

GREENVILLE — Gov. Nikki Haley's listing of 17 Republican lawmakers she praised for standing against tax hikes, pay raises, increased debt and for ethics reform has ignited debate among lawmakers and residents alike about whether the list was accurate or helpful.

Haley posted the list on her Facebook page Saturday morning before telling a state GOP convention that state Republican lawmakers aren't conservative enough.

"This is asking people for help because I can't count on the majority of Republicans to help me," she said on

her Facebook page. "This is not ill will or arrogance. It is about fighting for South Carolina and the hardworking taxpayers who call it home."

Some GOP lawmakers are pushing back, however.

Several GOP legislators took issue with the governor on Haley's Facebook page, and Haley apologized Sunday for her staff counting the absences of two Upstate lawmakers as deliberate "walks" from key votes, when both representatives, Rep. Wendy Nanney of Greenville and Rep. Joshua Putnam of Piedmont, were at hospitals at the time.

Sen. Larry Martin, a Pickens Republican and chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, was among the 17 legislators listed by Haley.

He said the mistakes over Nanney and Putnam highlight the misunderstandings that can occur with such lists.

Rep. Phyllis Henderson of Greer, who wasn't included on the list, said she doesn't understand why the governor criticized GOP lawmakers.

"As I told somebody, why do we as a party need to worry about the Democrats, because we are tearing each other down," she said.



Haley