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Governor Nikki Haley News:

The State: Minimum wage workers in SC favor increase (+ survey)

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/03/15/3328595/minimum-wage-workers-in-sc-favor.html#storylink=cpy>

Roddie Burris

For 40 hours every week, 28-year-old Columbia resident T. Pollock works in the \$195 billion U.S. wireless industry helping low-income customers get cell phones and service. She makes \$9.50 an hour — more than \$2 above the \$7.25 an hour federal minimum wage.

Note: “South Carolina’s unemployment rate is at a five-year low, and our state’s economy is the fastest-growing on the East Coast. Creating thousands of new jobs, not putting more government mandates on small businesses, is the best way to improve job opportunities for the people of our state,” said Doug Mayer, spokesman for Gov. Nikki Haley

Aiken Standard: MOX 101: The past, present and uncertain future

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20140316/AIK0101/140319538/1004/mox-101-the-past-present-and-uncertain-future>

Derrek Asberry

There's been a lot of back and forth between advocates and naysayers of the MOX facility under construction at the Savannah River Site, and both sides looking at the past and current facts of the facility to make their cases.

Note: In addition, the three South Carolina delegates have also advised Gov. Nikki Haley to take any possible legal actions to save the project. Since that time, Haley, and her staffers have agreed to explore possible legal options.

Greenville News: Funding formula won't hurt Greenville County schools

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20140316/NEWS/303160020/Funding-formula-won-t-hurt-Greenville-County-schools>

Ron Barnett

When legislators start talking about divvying out money for schools based on poverty within a school district, Greenville County Schools officials brace for bad news. The pupil weighting system, proposed by Gov. Nikki Haley in her State of the State address in January, is “something that has been talked about for ages but something we’ve never been able to get done,” Bingham said.

Greenville News: John de la Howe School objects to DJJ control

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20140316/NEWS/303160018/John-de-la-Howe-School-objects-DJJ-control>

Tim Smith

The 217-year-old John de la Howe School for troubled children remains defiantly opposed to a plan by Gov. Nikki Haley and House lawmakers to place it under the control of the state Department of Juvenile Justice for a year, arguing it would “send the wrong message.” The state school’s board, which forced the institution’s president to resign recently, is appointed by Haley.

Greenville News: Economics, rivalry may fuel BMW's next plans

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20140316/BUSINESS/303160019/Economics-rivalry-may-fuel-BMW-s-next-plans>

Woody White

Almost as intriguing as the big secret BMW promises to reveal late this month at its Greer assembly plant is what is driving, in the automaker’s words, this “significant economic and product announcement.” But the German company sent out a “request for coverage” alert on Thursday and said speakers would include

BMW AG chairman Norbert Reithofer, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker and Gov. Nikki Haley.

2014 Campaign Cycle News:

Post and Courier: Sheheen to introduce 'teen dating violence' bill as part of women's initiatives

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20140316/PC1603/140319570/1005/sheheen-to-introduce-teen-dating-violence-bill-as-part-of-womens-initiatives>

Jeremy Borden

The likely Democratic nominee for governor, state Sen. Vincent Sheheen, plans to introduce a bill in the state Senate this week that for the first time defines "teen dating violence" and establishes a statewide education curriculum around the issue.

Note: Haley's campaign spokesman, Rob Godfrey, said Haley has been a strong voice for women.

"Governor Haley resists gender stereotypes," Godfrey said. "As a woman, a wife, a mother and a daughter, she knows that not all women think alike on all issues. In her view, the best way to raise up the women of South Carolina is to raise up all of South Carolina. That's why she's tremendously proud of the fact that we're below the national unemployment average for first time since 2001, that more South Carolinians are working today than at any point in our history, and why she won't stop until every person in South Carolina - man, woman and child - has the opportunity they deserve."

Sumter Item: Partisan filing for midterms begins this week

http://www.theitem.com/news/local_news/partisan-filing-for-midterms-begins-this-week/article_db487108-3750-5748-9064-36897a2b415c.html

Braden Bunch

While many politicians have been making their intentions known for some time for various offices around the state, today marks the day in which they can officially start being candidates.

Note: All nine of the statewide constitutional races - highlighted by what appears to be a rematch of the 2010 gubernatorial election between Gov. Nikki Haley and state Sen. Vincent Sheheen - will be on the 2014 ballot. It appears unlikely that either of these two will appear on the June primary ballot, however, as no other candidates have announced intentions to challenge them for their party's nomination.

Note: As of the end of 2013, Haley had about \$3.7 million in her campaign coffers, while Sheheen had a \$1.4 million war chest for his gubernatorial bid.

Opinion / Editorial Roundup:

Post and Courier: Bring Commission on Higher Education into merger talks

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20140315/PC1002/140319502/1021/get-objective-view-of-merger>

Editorial

So far the debate over merging the College of Charleston and the Medical University of South Carolina has largely taken place in the political arena. Local Reps. Jim Merrill and Leon Stavrinakis have introduced a bill to that end, and a legislative committee has been formed to review the idea.

The State: Let SC Election Commission oversee county offices to safeguard everyone's vote

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/03/15/3326234/editorial-let-sc-election-commission.html#storylink=cpy>

Editorial

THE MAIN reason the Legislature has spent more than a year not fixing the election system that brought us Lillian McBride and Howard Jackson and now Sam Selph — and eight-hour waits to vote and uncounted ballots — is that legislators in the rest of the state don't understand that Richland County is the canary in the coal mine.

S.C. Political News:

The State: Young voters target of new SC Democratic Party director

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/03/15/3328629/the-buzz-young-voters-target-of.html#storylink=cpy>

Andrew Shain

The S.C. Democratic Party has hired a young executive director to go after young voters. Conor Hurley, 27, will start his new job Monday as filing gets under way for the June primary. One of the nation's youngest state party directors, he already has worked on seven campaigns since graduating from Arizona State University with a political science degree.

Florence Morning News: Filing day is here for Florence, Pee Dee candidates

http://www.scnw.com/news/politics/article_f1c68224-ac9b-11e3-be13-0017a43b2370.html

Gavin Jackson

Fear of the unknown, confidence, worry. Those are just some of the emotions before the start of any race and with the two-week candidate filing period opening at noon today, it's just the beginning of one of those emotions. Fear of the unknown.

Legislative Session News:

The State: Lawmakers to S.C. colleges: Choose freedom or funding

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/03/15/3328744/lesson-learned-sc-colleges-face.html#storylink=cpy>

Andrew Shain

Some S.C. legislators are trying to teach the state's public colleges a lesson in a way no one can recall being done before. Last week, S.C. House members blocked efforts to restore nearly \$70,000 taken away from two colleges for assigning gay-themed books to freshmen. However, a lawmaker withdrew a more onerous proposal – to keep \$1 million from each public school in the state until they banned “pornographic content” in classes.

Anderson Independent: Road buyback program added to S.C. budget

<http://www.independentmail.com/news/2014/mar/15/road-buyback-program-added-to-sc-budget/?partner=RSS>

Kirk Brown

State Rep. Brian White hopes a road buyback provision added to the state budget last week will benefit both the South Carolina Department of Transportation and local governments. The measure sponsored by the Republican from Anderson suspends for one year the requirement that county transportation committees spend at least 25 percent of their gas-tax revenue to maintain state roads.

The State: Richland legislators moving to clarify who sits on elections board

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/03/15/3328837/exclusive-richland-legislators.html#storylink=cpy>

Dawn Hinshaw

Richland County legislators will ask the county to provide legal representation as they move to separate the merged elections and voter registration boards, Rep. Joe Neal said. The move would clarify how legislators should go about setting up two offices joined by a 2011 law now deemed unconstitutional.

Sun News: Father of missing Horry County resident proposes law for families of missing people

<http://www.thestate.com/2014/03/16/3329337/father-of-missing-horry-county.html#storylink=cpy>

Jason M. Rodriguez

Eight words set a fire under an already passionate Brian Jordan – stepfather to missing Aynor resident Zack Malinowski – that prompted him to look into writing a law to help families of the missing: “Let us know if you've heard from him.” They're words murmured by law enforcement after Brian and his wife Melissa filed a missing person's report with the Horry County Police Department.

South Carolina News:

Associated Press: SC baby boomers form virtual villages as they age

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=uo5Hrt7B

Bruce Smith

Aging baby boomers want to stay in their own homes as long as possible and a way to do that, the so-called village concept, is catching on in South Carolina. Experts say it's less expensive for baby boomers as they age to live at home than in nursing homes, and people who remain in their homes are often happier and live longer. Some 8,000 baby boomers reach retirement age each day in the U.S.

Local News:

Florence Morning News: State agency honors Florence EMS director

http://www.scnw.com/news/local/article_bdf15d4a-ac94-11e3-851c-0017a43b2370.html

Gavin Jackson

Florence County Council Chairman has credited Ryon Watkins, director of Florence County Emergency Medical Services, with effectively managing a system that operates on a tight budget. That recognition is

starting to spread.

National News

Associated Press: South at heart of close fight to control US Senate

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268798/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=TWzPRnzf

Bill Barrow

The South is where President Barack Obama and Democrats long have struggled, and it's where the party's toughest battleground will be this year in the fight for control of the U.S. Senate. Three incumbents must face the consequences of having voted for Obama's health care law, but Republicans first must settle primaries in several states, including a challenge to Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky.

New York Times: Obama Factor Adds to Fears of Democrats

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/16/us/politics/obama-factor-adds-to-fears-of-democrats.html?partner=rss&emc=rss&smid=tw-thecaucus&_r=0

Jonathan Martin, Ashley Parker

Democrats are becoming increasingly alarmed about their midterm election fortunes amid President Obama's sinking approval ratings, a loss in a special House election in Florida last week and millions of dollars spent by Republican-aligned groups attacking the new health law.

Brian Symmes

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