



Title: **Diehard Republican**

Author:

Size: 1.39 square inch

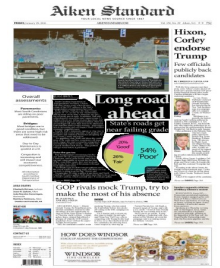
Aiken, SC Circulation: 19635



Diehard Republican

I'm a diehard Republican and I live in South Carolina, but I won't vote Republican if Nikki Haley is picked to run as the vice president.

Title: **Long road ahead told 3.3**
 Author: BY DAN BROWN dbrown@aikenstandard.com
 Size: 119.50 square inch
 Aiken, SC Circulation: 19635



Long road ahead

State's roads get near failing grade

BY DAN BROWN

dbrown@aikenstandard.com

South Carolina Department of Transportation Secretary Christy Hall didn't mince words when she gave a state of the DOT address to the state's transportation commissioners last week.

In her address, Hall gave the state's roads a grade of "D" in day-to-day maintenance, adding most of the state's motorists are driving on poorly paved roads. In addition, Hall told commissioners most of the state's approximate 3.3 million drivers are riding on poor pavement, and while most bridges are in good condition, there are several high-risk areas that need to be addressed. Hall ended her address with a warning – road congestion is increasing and will impact South Carolina's economic competitiveness.

Locally, Hall's statements appear to ring true in headlines and council agendas, with property annexations and continued headaches navigating Ai-

ken County's roads and streets.

"It's appalling what (Hall) said about the conditions of the roads and how congestion will negatively impact the state's economic competitiveness including Aiken County," said Aiken City Council member Dick Dewar. "This problem will get worse before it gets better."

Raise the gas tax

Past Transportation Commissioner Jim Rozier, from the 1st Congressional District in Charleston, said it's time for the state's driving and voting public to accept the fact that if they want better roads, they need to decide how to pay for it, either at the pump or through local option sales taxes.

"It will take a gas tax of 40 cents per gallon to cover the cost of repairs to existing roads, and there's no way anybody is going to go for that," Rozier said.

Georgia pays 40 cents a gallon in gas taxes and North Carolina 34 cents a gallon, both states more than twice as much as South Carolina, which currently pays 16 cents per gallon.

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ROADS

CONTINUED from 1A

There is movement from the governor's mansion addressing the state's road issues, allocating a chunk of the 2016 budget toward road repairs, which includes a graduated gas tax.

Governor Nikki Haley's budget proposal has earmarked roughly \$350 million for road-work, which includes a \$49 million phased-in gas price increase. In 2015, Haley said she would support raising the gas tax by 10 cents over three years if legislators cut income taxes significantly over 10 years.

'Let the DOT do its job'

John Hardee, the Transportation Commission's new vice chairman from the 2nd Congressional District, which includes Aiken County, said the DOT needs the proper tools in order to do its job – money.

"I hear all this talk about DOT reform," he said. "If you want reform, let the DOT do its job. Christy Hall knows what she's doing. Give the organization the money, and we'll show you what this organization can do."

Regarding Hall's assessment of the state's roads, Hardee couldn't agree more.

"I think that the new secretary is right on the money in

her assessment," Hardee said.

"Until we start widening our interstates and improving our roads, we're going to start losing business."

Hardee mentioned the widening of the Panama Canal and how it will adversely effect road traffic in the state.

"The widening of the Panama Canal will be bringing more container ships into Charleston, which is going to put more trucks on our roads, which is going to make traffic worse than it already is. If we're going to recruit new industry and continue to promote tourism we've got to fix our roads."

Hardee recommended raising the gas tax 12 cents instead of 10 cents, or explore other avenues of vehicle related revenue besides the gas tax.

"It only costs \$300 to buy a new car, we can go there," he said. "This is not a problem that came about yesterday. This is problem that started in the 1960s when we changed from a farming and agricul-

What do you think?

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tural state to an industry and tourism state."

'Aiken's hands are tied'

Council member Dewar said locally, Council's hands are tied.

"We have a limited ability to address the situation because these are state roads," he said. "Whiskey Road, Silver Bluff Road and Dougherty Road are all state roads. Most of the problems we have come from state roads."

Aiken County Administrator Clay Killian was not surprised by Hall's remarks.

"Nationwide, I think we are facing serious problems with aging infrastructure, not just roads, bridges, but water and sewer systems as well and we are going to have to address those problems," he said. "The repairs are expensive, but really cannot be avoided any

longer. The challenge will be finding the money needed to do it."

Moving traffic safely

Solving the state's road problems means figuring out a way to move a large body of traffic from one point on the map to another safely, at least that's how Aiken Department of Public Safety Chief Charles Barranco sees it.

"The focus in regard to the roads for us is to move people

safely from one place to the next," he said. "Traffic problems are all relative. Traffic in Columbia and Charleston, or Atlanta is worse than it is here in Aiken. The key is to keep traffic moving safely. Driver safety is our primary goal."

While not a traffic engineer, Barranco is able to assist in this via the synchronizing of traffic lights along intersections of Whiskey Road.

"Synchronization is something of a misnomer," he said. "Drivers will not be able to hit all green lights while driving down Whiskey Road. What we do is move a platoon of cars through the intersections, whether the traffic is on Whiskey Road or one of the intersecting roads. We can synchronize the traffic lights remotely based upon the amount of vehicles accessing a particular intersection."

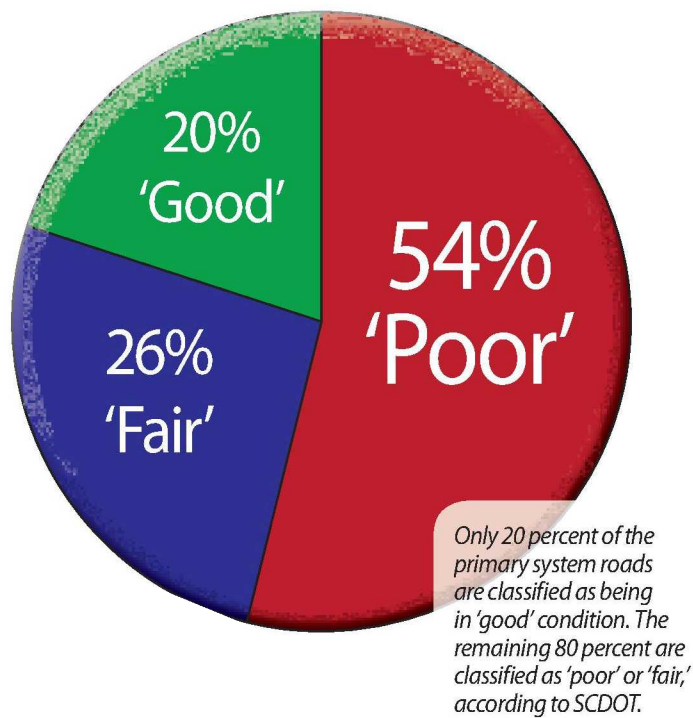
The City utilizes a traffic light synchronization software program called InSync that monitors traffic via cameras installed at various intersections about town.

Commissioner Hardee recalled an old state motto for South Carolina during the 1950s.

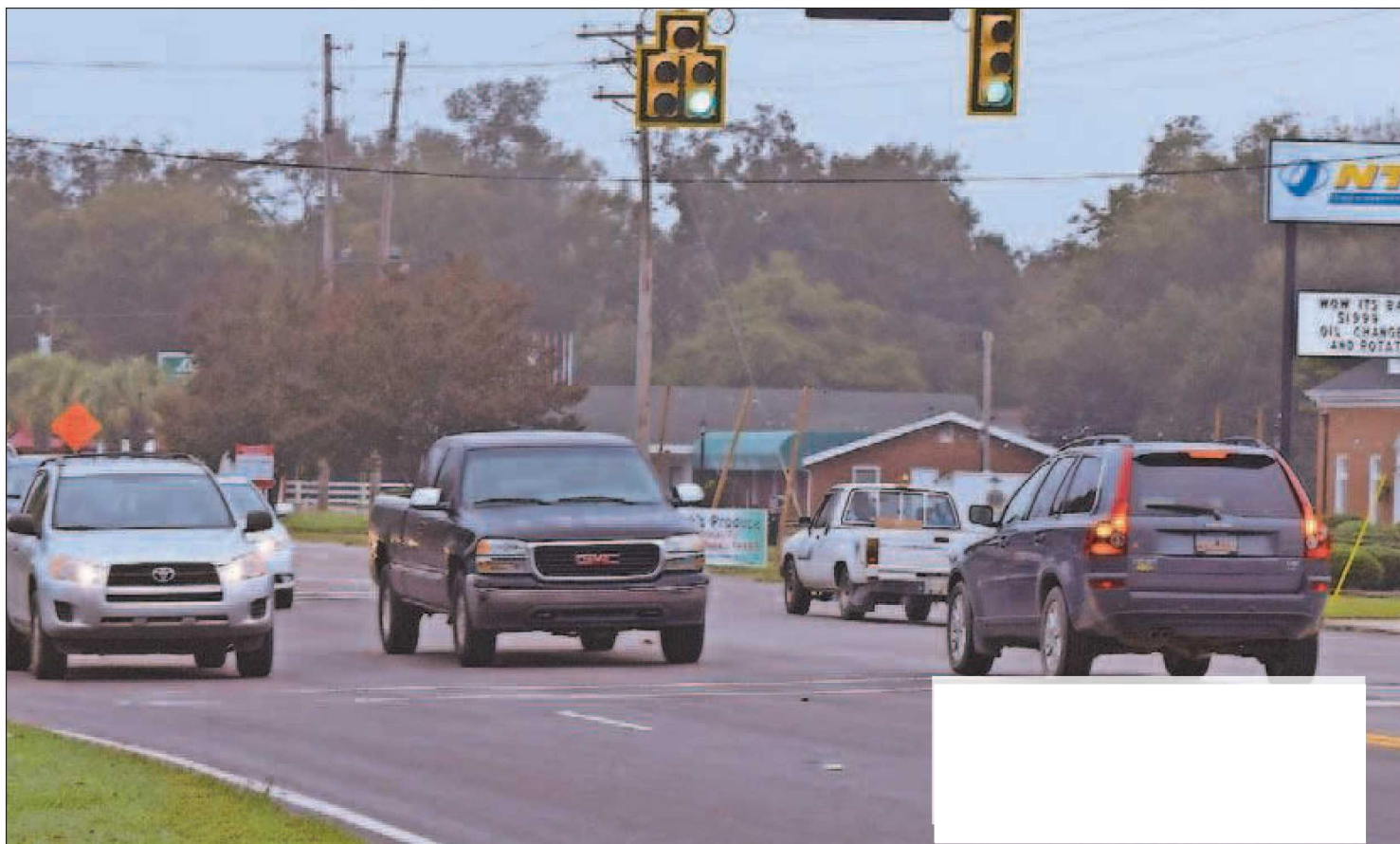
"See the best state on the best roads," he said. "We need to bring back that old motto and this time make it a reality."

Dan Brown is the government reporter for the *Aiken Standard*.

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South Carolina Department of Transportation Interim Secretary Christy Hall told commissioners most of the state's approximate 3.3 million drivers are riding on poor pavement. STAFF FILE PHOTO BY DAN BROWN

Title: **Haley: Donald Trump, rioters need to stay civil**
 Author: BY ANDREW SHAIN The State
 Size: 39.37 square inch
 Aiken, SC Circulation: 19635



Haley: Donald Trump, rioters need to stay civil

BY ANDREW SHAIN

The State

S.C. Republican Gov. Nikki Haley lumped GOP presidential front-runner Donald Trump with rioters in Baltimore when asked Wednesday about asking people not to follow the “angriest voices” in the nationally televised address.

Asked Wednesday why Trump’s support from voters continues to grow two weeks after her address, Haley, considered a favorite to make short lists for vice president, said she was referring to multiple groups of people with her “angriest voices” statement – not just Trump.

“If you’re going to take in context, talk about all the groups which is whether it’s groups that are rioting in Baltimore, whether it’s Donald Trump, whether it’s those who are wanting to ban a whole religion, whether it’s those who are getting upset in a way that they are singling out a certain group. That’s what we’re talking about,” she said at news conference at the S.C. State House.

“I think what Mr. Trump is doing is continuing to push through this candidacy. I think

he’s continuing to move forward. All we ask is that everybody stay civil and respectful in the way they do that.”

Some protests in Baltimore over the death of Freddie Gray in the back of a police vehicle last year turned violent. Hundreds of people were arrested and hundreds of businesses and cars were damaged.

The governor has said she was referring to Trump when she said in her State of the Union response this month that,

“During anxious times, it can be tempting to follow the siren call of the angriest voices. We must resist that temptation.”

Asked would having Trump or Texas Sen. Ted Cruz as the GOP presidential nominee hurt efforts to woo young women and minority voters, Haley made a pitch Wednesday for expanding the party’s base.

“My goal was coming off after the last election with Mitt Romney (in 2012) was to make sure that I did everything I could to open that umbrella – to make sure we opened it up

to Indian-Americans, Jewish-Americans, to make sure Hispanics and women felt a part of the Republican party,” the governor said.

“What I did with the (State of the State) address was very much start that conversation, which is we need to grow our umbrella. We don’t have room to close it,” she continued. “But what I want Republicans specifically to do is to remember that we want to grow that tent out. There’s a group of Republicans like me, who have seen that we have a great slate of minorities that are in elected office.”

Haley, who has not endorsed a 2016 candidate, would not say if she expects Trump to become more civil if he becomes the party’s nominee.

“We’ll find out,” she said.

Trump’s first reaction to Haley’s comment after the State of the Union was to say that Haley has a weak record on immigration. But during the GOP presidential debate this month, Trump accepted her description, saying “I was not offended. I said, ‘Huh, she’s right.’”



AP PHOTO/SEAN RAYFORD

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley delivers the State of the State in the House chambers at the South Carolina Statehouse on Jan. 20 in Columbia.

Title: **State prepares to legally defend MOX**
 Author: BY DERREK ASBERRY clasherry@aikenstandard.com
 Size: 37.66 square inch
 Aiken, SC Circulation: 19635



State prepares to legally defend MOX

BY DERREK ASBERRY

dasberry@aikenstandard.com

The state of South Carolina will take legal action against the Department of Energy for not paying fines associated with the Savannah River Site's MOX facility, the attorney general's office said Wednesday.

The confirmation came a day after Gov. Nikki Haley asked Attorney General Alan Wilson to initiate litigation against the federal agency after she attempted to collect \$1 million a day for missed milestones at the SRS Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrica-

tion Facility.

An email from Hayley Thrift, the public relations coordinator with Wilson's office, revisited Wilson's initial threat to sue in September when he sent a letter to Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz. Per a 2003 agreement signed by DOE and South Carolina, the federal agency was supposed to either remove 1 metric ton of weapons-grade plutonium from the state or process it through the SRS facility.

"At this point, we are finalizing the best possible course of action, but will be taking action as we said we would back in

September," Thrift

wrote on Wednesday.

The MOX facility is a key part of the overall plutonium disposition program, which is expected to convert 34 metric tons of weapons-grade plutonium into nuclear fuel. The effort would meet an agreement with Russia that states both countries must dispose of the same amount of plutonium.

The project has suffered cost overruns and delays over the years resulting in President Barack Obama's 2014 attempt to freeze the project while DOE searched for cheaper options.

Wilson responded by suing the federal government in March 2014 but eventually dropped the suit

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MOX

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once Moniz agreed to keep the project alive through the end of the fiscal year.

In 2015, multiple studies pinned MOX against other options. Part 1 of a congressionally mandated study released in May by Aerospace Corp. concluded that the MOX life-cycle cost is \$51 billion. In ad-

dition, a DOE-organized Red Team reviewed MOX last summer and concluded the project would cost \$800 million a year to be viable. That project came after Moniz said in June that it would cost \$1 billion a year for MOX to be viable.

Wilson's office views the cost projections and actions as a sign that DOE is attempting to back away from MOX.

"I have great concern over the actions displayed by the DOE over the last two years, and do not feel they can be trusted to follow the law," Thrift added. "The state cannot sit quietly any longer while the DOE continues to disregard its statutory obligations to South Carolina."

Derrek Asberry is the SRS

beat reporter for the *Aiken Standard* and a graduate of Georgia Southern University.

Title: **State prepares to legally defend MOX**
Author: BY DERREK ASBERRY clash erry^aikenstandard. com
Size: 37.66 square inch
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**Wilson****Moniz**



Title: **Gov. Haley**
Author:
Size: 3.41 square inch
Aiken, SC Circulation: 19635



Gov. Haley

I'm at a loss as to why Gov. Haley stated that there is no history of laws based on race or religion in America. This is obviously false. Perhaps she skipped her South Carolina history class? She already alienated the GOP base, and now she's lost some others who may have been inclined to support her. Good thing she's term-limited, because she wouldn't survive the GOP primary.

Title: **greenlights MOX suit**
 Author: BY DERREK ASBERRY dasberry@aikenstandard.com
 Size: 47.89 square inch
 Aiken, SC Circulation: 19635



Haley greenlights MOX suit

Attorney general asked to sue DOE over unpaid fines

BY DERREK ASBERRY

dasberry@aikenstandard.com

S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley is looking to sue the U.S. Department of Energy because the agency has failed to acknowledge her attempt to levy \$1 million a day for a missed deadline at the Savannah River Site's MOX facility.

Haley sent a Jan. 26 letter to S.C. At-

torney General Alan Wilson asking him to "initiate litigation on behalf

of the state of South Carolina against DOE."

Per a 2003 agreement signed by DOE and South Carolina, the federal agency was supposed to either remove 1 metric

ton of weapons-grade plutonium from

the state, or process it through the SRS Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility – the facility that is expected to convert 34 metric tons of the plutonium into

Please see **HALEY**, Page 12A

HALEY

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commercial nuclear fuel.

Neither occurred, which means DOE owes the state \$1 million a day, which began Jan. 1.

The Department of Energy has yet to pay, which is why Haley is greenlighting a lawsuit.

"As you and I have discussed," Haley wrote to Wilson, "South Carolina will not idly stand by while DOE continues – in violation of federal law – to ignore its commitment to the people of South Carolina."

Haley's letter to Wilson follows a Jan. 19 letter she received from U.S. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz.

In his letter, Moniz wrote that the Energy Department remains committed to South Carolina by suspending further transfers of defense plutonium intended for the MOX facility from other locations to the Savannah River Site.

The MOX facility is part of the SRS complex located in Aiken County.

Furthermore, Moniz said another plan to downblend six metric tons of non-MOX plutonium at SRS is an "endorsement of the site's current and future technical capabilities and skilled workforce."

However, Haley viewed the kudos as another indictment against South Carolina, telling Wilson that Moniz's response "not only ignores the \$1 million per day fine rightfully and statutorily due to South Carolina, it outlines its plan to send additional plutonium to the Savannah River Site."

Haley's attempt to sue follows a threat she made last month as the Jan. 1 deadline approached.

Despite efforts to levy the multimillion-dollar fine, the Department of Energy would first have to find available funding within its budget.

The *Aiken Standard* asked the agency earlier this year if it would seek additional funding from Congress to pay the fines. The agency only responded that it remains committed to South Carolina.

U.S. Rep. Joe Wilson, R-S.C., among other South Carolina congressmen, applauded Haley's threat to sue and has said she should use whatever litigation she can to hold the Department of Energy to its word.

Wilson added earlier this month that funding the MOX penalties could be solved with a line item shift in the budget.

The MOX project has been plagued with cost overruns and delays over the years. Moniz reported in June that it would cost \$1 billion a year to make significant progress.

Moniz is currently looking into a downblending alternative to the MOX project that would dilute the plutonium and send it to a repository.

He is expected to report his findings to President Barack Obama before the president rolls out his budget proposal Feb. 9.

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



Moniz



Title: **Nikki Haley**
Author:
Size: 1.70 square inch
Aiken, SC Circulation: 19635



Nikki Haley
For the second time this year, I am proud of Nikki Haley for speaking out against the stupidity of her party. I think she realizes that if she had been at Emanuel AME Church, she would have been shot, too.

Title: **Cheap oil doesn't reduce need to drill off S.C. coast**

Author:

Size: 23.71 square inch

Hilton Head Island, SC Circulation: 20015



Cheap oil doesn't reduce need to drill off S.C. coast

Considering the glut of cheap oil in the world, it would be tempting to drop plans to open up new areas of the Atlantic Ocean to oil and natural gas drilling. But holding back on energy production would ill-serve South Carolina and other coastal states. Gov. Nikki Haley and the state's congressional delegation are understandably not content to wait, citing the potential for economic development and reducing the nation's dependence on imported oil.

A year ago, the Obama administration released a draft of its five-year plan to open drilling in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia. The plan can still be revised. The current oil glut notwithstanding, there are two reasons to proceed with drilling off the Atlantic Coast.

This is an energy-rich region. The Department of Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management estimates that the Outer Continental Shelf holds 4.72 billion barrels of recoverable oil and 37.5 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. But those

figures are based on old data. Once drilling begins, estimates of oil and gas are usually revised upwards.

It could take a decade or longer for drilling to begin. By then, the energy picture could be very different than it is now. Instead of an abundance of low-cost oil, world supplies could be stretched tight, with gasoline prices double or even triple what they are today. Keep in mind that offshore oil and gas production has the potential to create thousands of jobs and significant revenue for South Carolina. A 2014 study done for the Palmetto Policy Forum projected that South Carolina would derive \$15 billion in economic benefits from offshore energy production by 2035.

Drilling in the ocean is safer and more tightly regulated than ever before. The Atlantic coast hasn't seen any new offshore oil and gas drilling in more than 30 years, since a few exploratory wells were drilled in the Baltimore Canyon trough about 100 miles southeast of Atlantic City from 1977 through 1984. It's past time to auction offshore leases in federal waters from Virginia to Georgia.

*- Jeffrey C. Nelson
Hilton Head*



Title: **Ethics reform**

Author:

Size: 13.79 square inch

Hilton Head Island, SC Circulation: 20015



Ethics reform

Agree or disagree with her tactics, Gov. Nikki Haley on Wednesday night made a strong statement about the need for South Carolina lawmakers, particularly senators, to finally pass meaningful ethics reform in 2016.

In the middle of her State of the State address, Haley asked senators to show their support for greater ethical accountability.

Haley justifiably expressed exasperation over the Senate's continuing failure to pass meaningful ethics reform. "Last year I told you I didn't know what else to say about ethics reform," she said. "Yet here we are again."

She listed the two main priorities as requiring public officials to disclose the sources of their income, and having independent investigations of legislators rather than having legislators investigate their own colleagues.

She then asked senators to stand if they supported each of these issues.... Yes, there is a reasonable argument that the State of the State is not the proper venue for political grandstanding and that Haley was out of line to use this tactic.

But there's a stronger and more compelling argument — bolstered by the number of ethical problems elected officials in this state have faced in recent years — that justifies Haley using this forum to call out lawmakers who have repeatedly refused to pass ethics reform that is perfectly reasonable and offers real protections to the people who put those lawmakers in office, pay their salaries and rely on their integrity.

— Greenville News

Title: **Cheap oil doesn't reduce need to drill off S.C. coast**
 Author:
 Size: 23.71 square inch
 Beaufort, SC Circulation: 11269



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