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To:
Date: 3/8/2016 8:28:22 AM
Subject: Morning Clips - Tuesday, March 8, 2016

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

McClatchy DC: Without aid, 2016 could be even worse for S.C. farmers

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/national/economy/article64610437.html>

Vera Bergengruen

2015 was a terrible year for South Carolina farmers.

Shaken farmers are dragging their old debts into the new year. They are frustrated that legislators, though well-intentioned, don't seem to understand why it takes so much money to restart the agriculture industry after disastrous weather. With the spring planting season looming, they worry that the patchwork of what many see as meager emergency aid, crop insurance and extra loans won't make a dent in paying bills or putting new crops in the ground. The state's biggest industry suffered \$587 million in losses last year, with \$376 million due to the near-complete destruction of soybean, cotton and peanut crops, according to the S.C. Department of Agriculture.

Note: Haley requested \$140 million in federal aid for homeowners affected by the flood but not farmers, saying she opposed bailing them out. The governor said farmers already had a federally subsidized insurance program and that some businesses shouldn't receive special treatment over others.

Note: Last week, South Carolina received \$157 million in federal aid for flood recovery, more than half of the \$300 million Congress allocated. Farmers again requested that some of the money be used to cover their losses, and Haley opposed it.

S.C. General Assembly News:

Post and Courier: South Carolina Senate could consider nitrogen gas for executions

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160307/PC1603/160309492>

Maya T. Prabhu

Nitrogen gas could be used to execute death row prisoners if a proposal by two South Carolina senators is approved. Sens. Mike Fair, R-Greenville, and Brad Hutto, D-Orangeburg, proposed using the gas as an alternative to a bill that would keep the names of companies that sell the drugs needed for lethal injections from the public. "It's carried out as if it were lethal injection," Fair said of using nitrogen gas. "It's just breathed in, they go to sleep and then he or she dies."

Note: "We don't have an order (from the Supreme Court) now, but we have to plan like we do," Stirling said. "Some states have just said we're not going to have the death penalty. That's not what's happening here."

WSPA: SC Cannot Carry Out Executions

<http://wspa.com/2016/03/07/sc-cannot-carry-out-executions/>

Robert Kittle

Even though South Carolina has the death penalty, and 44 men on death row, it has no way to carry out an execution right now, unless an inmate were to choose the electric chair. The state's supply of the drugs used for lethal injections expired in 2013 and drug companies have been unwilling to sell the state more. "Once we tell them that we're the Department of Corrections, they stop the conversations," says Bryan Stirling, director of the SC Department of Corrections. State senators are working on a bill they hope will change that. The bill would shield pharmaceutical companies' names

from being released for selling lethal injection drugs to the state. "There's not a guarantee that these companies would sell," Stirling says. "No one has come to me and said, 'If you have this shield law we will sell.' We've asked the attorney general's office for an opinion. They said that companies are included in the current law, but just out of an abundance of caution we want to go forward and go to the companies and say, 'There's a law on the books that will protect you.'"

WMBF: SC lethal injections on hold as toxic serums expire, proposed bill seeks bargaining tool for procurement

<http://www.wmbfnews.com/story/31410668/sc-lethal-injections-on-hold-as-toxic-serums-expire-proposed-bill-seeks-bargaining-tool-for-procurement>

Kaitlin Stansell

South Carolina's supply of lethal injection drugs has expired, and the Department of Corrections is having trouble buying more. But a proposed bill sitting in the General Assembly could change that, though not everyone is on board with the way lawmakers want to go about it. "Once they find out we're the Department of Corrections, they stop talking to us. The conversation basically ends," DOC Director Bryan Stirling said. He hopes a bill in the General Assembly that would keep the identities and information of pharmaceutical companies or compounding pharmacies a secret could be used as a bargaining tool.

The State: Who's running for the S.C. Legislature?

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article64628952.html>

Cassie Cope, Jamie Self, and Andy Shain

Filing for the S.C. House and Senate seats begins March 16 at noon. Who's running? The Buzz has gone through news releases and S.C. Ethics Commission filings to put together a list of candidates planning to challenge sitting incumbents or run for a vacated seat.

Greenville News: MRR Pickens renews offer to sell landfill property, abandon coal ash fight, legislator says

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/pickens-county/2016/03/07/mrr-pickens-renews-offer-sell-landfill-property-abandon-coal-ash-fight-legislator-says/81442218/>

Ron Barnett

Even as it postures for a possible legal battle over South Carolina's new coal ash law, the company that has been fighting to put a coal ash landfill in Pickens County told a state lawmaker as recently as Friday that it is willing to sell the landfill property for "a reasonable price" and abandon its plan. "I honestly believe a reasonable offer would get them out of town," state Rep. Davey Hiott told The Greenville News on Monday, after speaking with representatives of MRR Pickens LLC on Friday.

Florence Morning News: Roads, farms talking points at event for Leatherman

http://www.scnow.com/news/article_9679d3c2-e4ce-11e5-825e-5fe4255b908f.html

Joshua Lloyd

At a community forum hosted by Florence Republican Sen. Hugh K. Leatherman Sr. on Monday evening, constituents boasted about the 36-year S.C. Senate veteran's achievements on roads and agriculture in the Pee Dee. Despite reports of criticism and favoritism from other senators and the governor, many attendees said Leatherman has always kept his promise to the people of Florence County. "I've seen him make a lot of changes around here," he said. "A lot of what goes on in the state happens in the Upstate, and the Pee Dee gets the short end. Hugh Leatherman looks out for not only Florence but the entire Pee Dee. It's not too much power; it's doing what you told the people you were going to do."

SC Agency News:

WIS: Legislator says privacy, space to work among concerns with outdated DSS building

<http://www.wistv.com/story/31409096/legislator-says-privacy-space-to-work-among-concerns-with-outdated-dss-building>

Billie Jean Shaw

On Monday, lawmakers sounded off regarding the need to improve a local Department of Social Services office during a Richland County Legislative Delegation committee meeting. Sen. Joel Lourie, who is the chairman of that committee, expressed his frustration over the lack of steps taken to improve the facility which was built in the 1960's. After touring the office, Sen. Lourie said the building is outdated and there is a need for more space, privacy for caseworkers, and parking spaces. Sen. Lourie said the State is doing its job hiring people, but the county needs to provide a decent place for them to work.

WLTX: DSS In Works For Renovation or New Building

<http://www.wltx.com/news/dss-in-works-for-renovation-or-new-building/72691963>

Sonia Gutierrez

For almost two years the Richland County Department of Social Services has been trying to update their facility. With no head way, Senator Joel Lourie got an update from the County and DSS leaders on Monday. Richland County is trying to decide between spending up to 34 million dollars for a new building or 12 million to renovate the existing one. Until that happens, families have limited space to meet in. The building is over 50 years old and houses about 300 employees. "Our job at the state level is to provide the service, your job [county council] is to provide the building and we can't find more case workers if y'all don't have a place to put them" said Lourie.

WIS: Lawmakers putting critical eye on DJJ after concerns raised

<http://www.wistv.com/story/31407844/lawmakers-putting-critical-eye-on-djj-after-concerns-raised>

Meaghan Norman

The state has been studying DJJ since last year, but recent issues have brought up new questions about safety. "The incident that took place 10 days ago was unacceptable," Haley press secretary Chaney Adams said. "The governor and officials at the Department of Juvenile Justice are working on changes to strengthen security at DJJ facilities and to make sure we prevent incidents like this from happening again." On March 1, the House Oversight Committee sent a letter to Gov. Nikki Haley stating serious concerns with DJJ.

S.C. Political News:

Island Packet: Sen. Davis says he will support Trump if nominated

<http://www.islandpacket.com/news/politics-government/election/article64622282.html>

Mandy Matney

State Sen. Tom Davis said he would support Donald Trump as a presidential candidate if he is the Republican nominee. Davis shared his opinions Monday at the Hilton Head Island 1st Monday Republican Lunch Group, where members discussed the pros and cons of a Trump presidency as the Trump campaign continues to gain momentum. Davis said Republicans should recognize the legitimacy in Trump's campaign. "Donald Trump's popularity is real, it runs deep, it cuts across all economic strata, it cuts across all demographics, and is evidence of the fact that people are tired of politics as usual," he said. Davis said Trump is "not his first choice" but he would vote for him if he was the presidential nominee because "it is much better than the alternative of Hilary Clinton."

WCSC: SC Lawmaker to help in fight to remove Confederate emblem from Mississippi State Flag

<http://www.live5news.com/story/31409894/sc-lawmaker-to-help-in-fight-to-remove-confederate-emblem-from-mississippi-state-flag>

Raphael James

South Carolina Representative Justin Bamberg is headed to Jackson, Mississippi tomorrow to support a lawsuit against that state's governor to remove the state flag. Mississippi is the last state in the country to display the Confederate battle emblem on its official state flag. Bamberg, who is also

the attorney representing the family of Walter Scott, plans to lend his voice to those in Mississippi calling for the flag to come down. Mississippi attorney Carlos Moore has filed a federal lawsuit against Governor Phil Bryant, to have the flag removed.

Post and Courier: Donald Beatty to run unopposed for S.C. chief justice

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160307/PC1603/160309502>

Gavin Jackson

Associate Justice Donald Beatty is the only candidate in the running to be the next chief justice of the South Carolina Supreme Court. Chief Justice Costa Pleicones will retire at the end of this year. Lawmakers will elect a new chief justice in May for the 2017 term.

Sun News: Myrtle Beach businessman challenges incumbent Rankin

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/news/local/article64651147.html>

Charles D. Perry

State Sen. Luke Rankin will face some opposition in June's Republican primary. Businessman Scott Pyle on Monday announced he will challenge the Myrtle Beach lawmaker, who has served in the senate since 1993. "I'm running to bring a common sense business approach to government," Pyle said in a news release announcing his campaign for the District 33 seat. "I will fight for term limits, real ethics reform, comprehensive tax reform and to represent our district better and ensure Horry County gets back our fair share of money we send to Columbia."

The State: Charleston Democrat not seeking re-election to S.C. House

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article64573307.html>

Cassie Cope

State Rep. Mary Tinkler, D-Charleston, does not plan to seek re-election to her S.C. House seat, instead running for Charleston County treasurer. Tinkler is in her first term in the House, having succeeded former S.C. House Speaker Bobby Harrell. Harrell pleaded guilty to using campaign money for personal expenses, agreeing to resign his House seat and not seek public office for three years.

Post and Courier: Rep. Mary Tinkler running for county treasurer instead of second term in House

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160307/PC1603/160309513>

Gavin Jackson

Rep. Mary Tinkler said Monday that she will not seek a second term in the state House of Representatives and will instead run for Charleston County treasurer. "Serving the people of District 114 has been an incredible experience for me," Tinkler said in a statement. "I now look forward to being in Charleston and serving this community in a different way." Current county Treasurer Andrew Smith, a Republican, has been in office since 1997 and will run again this year.

Aiken Standard: Aiken County Probate Judge Sue Roe will not seek re-election

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20160307/AIK0101/160309530>

Christina Cleveland

Aiken County Probate Judge Sue Roe, who has worked in the Aiken County Courthouse for at least five decades, has announced she will not seek re-election in November. In a letter dated March 3, Roe said it "has been my honor to serve the citizens of Aiken County as Probate Judge for the past 32 years. ... I would like to express my deep appreciation to all the citizens of this county for allowing me to serve."

Independent Mail: No election for Iva Town Council, mayor this year

<http://www.independentmail.com/news/no-election-for-iva-town-council-mayor-this-year-2d778ad3-ed99-1092-e053-0100007f8f9e-371328351.html>

Frances Parish

With no one challenging the Iva Town Council members or the mayor, the current council members except for one will return to their seats. The Iva municipal elections commission met Monday afternoon to sign the certifications for each of the candidates for Town Council and mayor. Iva Mayor Bobby Gentry will remain as mayor for his seventh term. In his upcoming term, he said he would continue to improve the town, bringing in more businesses. "I love the town," Gentry said. "I have a good working relationship with the community."

Post and Courier: New housing for Tent City homeless might take longer than first thought
<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160307/PC16/160309522>

Diane Knich

The city of Charleston probably won't find housing for all residents of the homeless encampment known as Tent City by its early April deadline, said Anthony Haro, executive director of the Lowcountry Homeless Coalition. That's partly because the city and its team of supporters are trying to ensure these homeless residents get the help they need — and don't simply move their tent to a new part of town. State Rep. Wendell Gilliard toured the encampment Monday and said he will continue to push local, state and even the federal government to do more for the city's homeless residents.

Opinion / Editorial Roundup:

Post and Courier: Alimony reform needed

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160308/PC1002/160309482>

Letter

The March 2 article about the alimony reform bill being considered in the state Legislature was good, but served to perpetuate our patently unfair system. The interviewee, Ms. Eslinger, makes a familiar, but incorrect, argument posing men against women. Bill H-4029 is not an anti-women bill; it is a fairness for all bill. The current laws are unfair, misogynistic and based on societal assumptions that no longer exist. The bill does nothing to reduce the ability of the legal process to consider all aspects of every case; however, it does change the presumption of permanent alimony to one of limited alimony, and it allows for reasonable adjustments should financial situations change. The current situation discourages remarriage, forces individuals on both sides of a divorce to live lies and keeps many men and women from providing for their own future. If the current system were fair then I would be able to pay my alimony obligation, save for my retirement and not live paycheck to paycheck with no savings.

The State: Editorials from across South Carolina: early primaries, Hugh Leatherman, gas tax
<http://www.thestate.com/opinion/op-ed/article64582917.html>

The media attention is a nice benefit. Who doesn't like hearing our state's name, in a generally positive light, peppering the national news?; Thumbs down to the notion of ousting Hugh K. Leatherman Sr. from the South Carolina Senate.; The state's gas tax hasn't been increased since 1987, despite the demonstrable need for road and bridge work. But a proposed hike was scuttled to avoid a continuing filibuster by senators generally opposed to new taxes.

South Carolina News:

Post and Courier: South Carolina ports agency buying Fairlawn site as part of harbor deepening
<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160307/PC05/160309484>

David Wren

The State Ports Authority will check another box off the list of preparations for harbor deepening this week by exercising an option to pay about \$4 million for 1,100 acres of land adjacent to the Francis Marion Forest. The property, part of the Fairlawn Plantation tract, will be used to mitigate an expected 334 acres of saltwater intrusion into freshwater wetlands during the upcoming dredging project, which will deepen Charleston Harbor to 52 feet. "This is another exciting jump forward to getting the harbor deepening completed," said Pamela Lackey, a member of the SPA's board of directors.

Post and Courier: Town hall addresses student literacy in South Carolina

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160307/PC16/160309501>

Deanna Pan

Policymakers and educators emphasized community collaboration, funding and parental involvement Monday at a town hall focused on improving the state's alarming rates of reading deficiency among third- and fourth-grade students. In South Carolina, nearly two-thirds of all fourth-graders are reading below grade level, placing the Palmetto State 39th nationally in reading proficiency. "The deficiency on reading in South Carolina today is a disaster," said Neil Robinson, chairman of the state Education Oversight Committee. "It is worse than the flooding that we experienced this past year and it is worse than the state of our roads, which seem to take up all the time in Columbia these days."

The State: Dairy Queen making a bigger push into the Palmetto State

<http://www.thestate.com/news/business/article64668827.html>

Roddie Burris

The Minnesota-based business has begun recruiting franchisors to open 75 stand-alone restaurants in the Palmetto State in coming years – up to 15 of those in the Columbia area, company executives said Monday. The first of the new Columbia restaurants could open late this year or in early 2017, according to Jim Kerr, vice president of franchise development for International Dairy Queen Inc. "Columbia is one of the key markets within South Carolina we have not been able to penetrate yet," Kerr said.

Post and Courier: Ryan's owner closing 6 South Carolina restaurants under bankruptcy plan

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160307/PC05/160309490>

John McDermott

The company that owns the South Carolina-founded Ryan's and several other casual dining chains filed for bankruptcy protection Monday and is scaling back its presence in the Palmetto State as part of its restructuring. In South Carolina, the company said it is shuttering six underperforming Ryan's locations as part of the reorganization. They are in Columbia, Conway, Greer, Orangeburg, Spartanburg and Surfside Beach.

Local News:

Post and Courier: Charleston divvying up second wave of donations to Emanuel AME families

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160307/PC16/160309512>

Jennifer Berry Hawes

The city of Charleston's Mother Emanuel Hope Fund is disbursing \$600,000 in a second wave of donations to the nine victims' families and five survivors of the Emanuel AME Church shooting last summer. More than 6,500 donors from across the globe opened their hearts and wallets to help those impacted when a self-proclaimed racist gunman opened fire during the church's Bible study on June 17. Donations continued to arrive even after the city gave out the first wave of \$2.5 million in September. The second round is being divvied up using the same formula as the first: 55 percent divided equally among the slain victims' beneficiaries, 25 percent split among shooting survivors, 10 percent given to children of those killed, 5 percent given to education expenses and 5 percent set aside in a "special needs" account.

Associated Press: Charleston begins meetings on police-community relations

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=XtgiCRc7

Charleston is embarking on a series of meetings with the public to discuss ways to strengthen the ties between city residents and local police. The Illumination Project was conceived last year as a way to build on the unity shown in the aftermath of the Emanuel AME Church shootings which left nine people dead. After the tragedy, in one show of unity, thousands of people joined hands on the Ravenel Bridge linking Charleston to Mount Pleasant. During the coming months, residents and

police will gather for listening sessions, the first of which is Tuesday evening. The idea is to let people share their opinions on how police work is done and possible improvements.

Post and Courier: Charleston County Sheriff's Office to launch student-deputy lunch program this week

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160307/PC16/160309488>

Melissa Boughton

A new community policing-based initiative at the Charleston County Sheriff's Office will kick off with a youth-mentoring program called "lunch with deputies." The goal of the program is to promote positive interactions between deputies and students from local elementary and middle schools by having lunch and engaging in positive conversation, according to a news release from the Sheriff's Office. The program will begin Wednesday at Ellington Elementary School in Ravenel. The program is expected to expand to several other schools in the rural areas of Charleston County.

The State: Lexington County may tell town, state police to chip in for jail

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article64591782.html>

Tim Flach

Lexington County may join other counties that impose fees on municipalities and state agencies for housing prisoners in the county jail. Doing that is one way to add guards amid a financial pinch created largely by state aid reductions that total \$20 million for Lexington County during the past eight years, supporters of the plan say. Opposition already is stirring to the possibility of a jail fee. "I'd have tremendous indigestion with that," Batesburg-Leesville Mayor Rita Crapps said. "Our residents already pay (property) taxes for that service, so imposing an extra fee for it is double taxation to me."

WSPA: Upstate Fire Chief Removed From Position

<http://wspa.com/2016/03/07/upstate-fire-chief-removed-from-position/>

Eryn Rogers

An Upstate fire department is under new leadership after a board removed the current fire chief. The Kelly Kelton Fire Department Board met in executive session for more than three and a half hours Monday night. And, at the end, they voted 4 to 1 to removed Chief Bryan Farr from his position but to keep him on the roster. Farr was placed on administrative leave two weeks ago as the board conducted its internal investigation. The investigation stemmed from a call on Super Bowl Sunday. Initially, firefighters on scene said when Farr arrived he seemed drunk. He admitted to having a few drinks several hours before the call. However, the board's decision to remove him had nothing to do with that allegation. They said they removed Farr because he challenged command authority on scene which is a direct violation of a county agreement.

Post and Courier: Charleston airport's revenue up, expenses down so far this year

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160307/PC05/160309491>

Warren L. Wise

Driven by more passengers, revenue is up and expenses are down during the first six months of the spending year for the agency overseeing Charleston International Airport. The Charleston County Aviation Authority reported Monday revenue for the state's busiest airport came in at 52.2 percent of the yearly budget for the July-December period while expenses accounted for 37.5 percent of spending through the first six months of the fiscal year. Expenses are down mainly because a \$4.7 million interest payment on debt for the nearly \$200 million makeover of the terminal was paid Jan. 1.

Aiken Standard: SCDOT: New design for York Street bridge to include wood, concrete

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20160307/AIK0101/160309514>

Dan Brown

"We are planning on going to the public at the end of the month to present a concept plan on the York Street bridge, which will include a wooden or faux wooden surface and siding," Young said. "The base of the bridge and support pilings will be concrete." The York Street bridge will retain its aesthetic

charm to coincide with the historic character of the downtown Aiken area, but will also have the structural integrity to withstand the traffic demands as a main artery through town, Young added.

The Herald: York County Council approves rezoning for former stadium site in Fort Mill

<http://www.heraldonline.com/news/local/article64666407.html>

Bristow Marchant

Developers looking to turn the grounds of a former baseball stadium into a mix of commercial development and housing now have the green light from the York County Council. The council on Monday unanimously approved a rezoning request from the Cato fashion company that will allow Cato to complete a new, mixed-use development for the former site of Knights Stadium in the Fort Mill area. The stadium has already been demolished, but Cato needed a new zoning classification to begin construction on the new planned development.

Post and Courier: Hargett's attempt to refund residents for school security officers fails

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160307/PC16/160309465>

Brenda Rindge

A proposal to refund Dorchester County residents next year for the cost of this year's school security officers failed to get support Monday. Council also agreed that officers are needed in the schools, but disagreed on how they should be funded. Councilman Larry Hargett made a motion to credit residents for a tax that was added after this year's budget was approved, but it failed 2-4, with only Hargett and Councilwoman Carroll Duncan in favor.

WSPA: Spartanburg District 7 to vote on opening of two new schools

<http://wspa.com/2016/03/07/spartanburg-district-7-to-vote-on-opening-of-two-new-schools/>

Tony Cedrone

Hundreds of residents in Spartanburg District 7 are speaking out about the \$185 million proposal to combine Chapman and Houston Elementary Schools into a new building, build a new Spartanburg high school, and move McCracken middle school to the existing Spartanburg High. The plan would increase taxes on homes valued at \$100k by \$40, at least \$6 on cars, and \$60 on businesses valued at \$100k. The referendum resolution to improve some of the districts aging schools was unanimously approved by the school board in January and now it's up to you to approve it or vote against it next week.

National News:

The State: Clinton, Trump eye Tuesday wins

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article64669567.html>

After Tuesday's primaries, the Bern could be a memory and Donald Trump either will — or won't — be closer to the GOP presidential nominee. The key? Michigan and Mississippi.

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