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Subject: Morning Clips - Monday, March 14, 2016

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

Times and Democrat: Fire is a key way to prevent wildfire losses

http://thetandd.com/news/opinion/editorial/fire-is-a-key-way-to-prevent-wildfire-losses/article_e8942083-7cb2-53f1-810a-22d3844ade2e.html

Wildfires destroy thousands of acres of forest annually in a state rich in woodlands. It doesn't have to be. That's the message from Gov. Nikki Haley and South Carolina experts. They contend many acres could be saved if land owners would resort to fighting fire with fire. As unusual as it may seem to the layman, prescribed burns are beneficial — practically essential — to forests.

Note: Haley has proclaimed March 2016 Prescribed Fire Awareness Month in South Carolina. A coalition of state, federal and non-governmental land-management organizations under the umbrella of the South Carolina Prescribed Fire Council, including the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, requested the proclamation to raise awareness of the essential role that fire plays in both the stewardship of our natural resources and the protection of lives and property.

Note: "Prescribed burning is not only the most effective, economical protection against wildfires because it reduces accumulated fuels," said Haley in her proclamation, "but it is also a key tool in managing and maintaining the ecological integrity of South Carolina's woodlands, grasslands, agricultural areas and wildlife habitats."

S.C. General Assembly News:

Post and Courier: Lawmaker pushing for more 'move over' law awareness in South Carolina

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160313/PC16/160319942>

Melissa Boughton

An Upstate lawmaker wants to ensure S.C. drivers know that moving over for emergency vehicles, including tow truck drivers, is the law and often a matter of life and death. A bill introduced by Rep. Donna Hicks, R-Boiling Springs, to designate April as "Move Over Awareness Month," passed unanimously Wednesday in the House Committee on Education and Public Works and is expected to be up for a vote on the House floor this week. The bill would require the S.C. Departments of Transportation and Public Safety to conduct programs during the month of April that emphasize the importance of drivers moving over to an adjacent lane whenever possible when approaching or passing through a highway work zone, an emergency scene or any other traffic incident.

Post and Courier: Will S.C. lawmakers lick 'liquorcycle' exemptions?

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160313/PC16/160319824>

Robert Behre

South Carolina still provides one legal option for driving drunk, and it's unclear if state lawmakers will put a cork in it this year. The state's current moped laws are a lax and confusing hodgepodge that essentially allow those riding motorized scooters with smaller engines to operate as freely as bicyclists. As a result, thousands of moped drivers travel the state's roads without a license or insurance. State Sen. Larry Grooms, R-Charleston, said the General Assembly has considered multiple moped bills for the past six years, but a current bill combines many of those reform ideas. The bill has passed the House, but its path through the Senate has been delayed by debate over a roads bill. Grooms said he hopes the Senate will act, but there will be opposition.

Independent Mail: S.C. Senate to consider refugees measure

<http://www.independentmail.com/news/sc-senate-to-consider-refugees-measure-2df10d1f-7b8e-3480-e053-0100007f37f6-371931031.html>

Kirk Brown

The South Carolina Senate is expected to consider legislation this week that supporters hope will lessen the threat of terrorism by discouraging foreign refugees from resettling in the state. As currently crafted, the measure would require refugees to register with the South Carolina Department of Social Services within 30 days of entering the state. The bill also calls on the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division to check on whether any refugees placed in the state pose a public safety risk. Sen. Kevin Bryant, a Republican from Anderson who is one of the bill's co-sponsors, said he will offer an amendment that is intended to strengthen the measure. Under his proposal, refugee-sponsoring organizations in the state would be civilly liable if a refugee from a country recognized as a state sponsor of terrorism kills or hurts anyone or damages or steals property.

Greenville News: Residents should have known more about landfill

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/opinion/editorials/2016/03/13/residents-should-have-known-more-landfill/81577956/>

Ron Barnett

Pickens County residents fighting a plan to dump coal ash near their homes have reason to be encouraged after state lawmakers and the Department of Health and Environmental Control heard their pleas to stop the plan. The state Legislature has swiftly passed a law that prohibits coal ash from being dumped in unlined landfills such as the one in Pickens County. Gov. Nikki Haley signed the bill into law. The law was proposed by Sen. Larry Martin and Rep. Davey Hiott who represent Pickens County. Residents deserved to be heard on this issue after the company was given a permit for the landfill and then a request to expand the volume of waste to be deposited there was granted by DHEC with little input from residents. That residents were shut out of the process and only knew very late in the game that the company intended to dump coal ash at the landfill speaks to something being broken in South Carolina government.

Opinion / Editorial Roundup:**Post and Courier:** Medicaid expansion is another state-federal success story

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160314/PC1002/160319756>

Editorial

Over the past several years, arguments for Medicaid expansion in South Carolina have been made using sound economic, budgetary and public health rationales. They have collapsed, however, under the reflexive antipathy toward the Affordable Care Act of Gov. Nikki Haley and conservatives in the state legislature. The result: Tens of thousands of South Carolina's workers go without health insurance compared to states that expanded Medicaid, according to a study by Families USA. Expansion states, on average, saw a 25 percent decline in their rate of uninsured workers, compared to just 10 percent for South Carolina — a difference of more than 2 to 1.

Aiken Standard: Give gun reforms a fighting chance

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20160314/AIK0201/160319893>

Editorial

There are dozens of bills related to guns floating around in the South Carolina Statehouse, several of which are reasonable and prudent responses to the scourge of gun violence that devastates families as it claims lives each day across the state. Others, however, attempt to preclude the state from taking meaningful action.

South Carolina News:

Associated Press: Emergency officials holding 3-day earthquake drill in SC
http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=IM1VnY87

SC State Wire

State and local agencies are working this week to make sure South Carolina is ready for the big one. Starting Monday, the South Carolina Emergency Management Division is hosting the state's annual disaster exercise. The agency says it is coordinating with county and state emergency response officials to test their abilities to recover from an earthquake. The state Emergency Operations Center in West Columbia will be fully activated for the duration of the three-day exercise.

Associated Press: This week SC drivers can get suspensions reduced or cleared
http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=AmgOkZpJ

SC State Wire

This week is driver amnesty week in South Carolina, a time when drivers with certain kinds of license suspensions may apply to have suspension time reduced or cleared. The Department of Motor Vehicles says the program assists drivers with license suspensions for having too many points or for driving an unlicensed taxi or vehicle. Other types of suspensions include those for operating or allowing operation of an uninsured vehicle or a suspension for driving under suspension.

Times and Democrat: Peanuts coming out of their shell: Crop has become one of the hottest in Palmetto State

http://thetandd.com/business/agriculture/article_bf7b6ca9-2b59-5773-acb6-70e32a525816.html

Larry Chesney

A lot of South Carolina farmers are going nuts over peanuts, which is pretty amazing considering peanuts aren't actually nuts. According to the American Peanut Council, peanuts are the 12th most valuable cash crop grown in the United States with a farm value of more than \$1 billion. South Carolina farmers raise a mixture of Virginia and Runner types, with Orangeburg County being the largest producer.

Local News:

The State: Woodyard Fund helped more than 300 families with utility bills

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article65800657.html>

Jane Moon Dail

Just over 300 families have received help this winter as part of the annual Woodyard Fund campaign. Many of the people requesting assistance were affected by the Oct. 4 floods, Coulson said, noting some people were directly affected, such as having damage to their homes, or indirectly, such as seeing less income due to business closings. Others often had medical crises or lost employment. According to the Salvation Army, donations were down slightly, with current year donations at \$96,274.72 compared with \$110,539.83 for the same period last year.

Greenville News: Greenville native soars to U.S. Indoor title

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/sports/college/2016/03/13/greenville-native-soars-us-indoor-title/81739108/>

Scott Keeper

Sandi Morris's visit to Portland, Oregon, got a bit more interesting Saturday night. Morris joined the rare air of the "16-Foot Club" at the USA Track & Field Indoor Championships, clearing 16 feet, 23¾ inches to win a hotly contested pole vault competition that included former Olympic champion Jenn Surr and Demi Payne at the Oregon Convention Center. Morris set two personal bests during the event, and her winning height ranks as the third-best in the world all-time. The victory earned the 23-year-old Morris a spot on the USA Team for the upcoming World Championships, which begins Thursday at the same site.

Post and Courier: School district plays hardball with contractor to get buses running on time

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160314/PC16/160319871>

Paul Bowers

After fielding phone calls from irate parents for months, the Charleston County School District is now playing hardball with Durham to get its buses running on time. Since January, the district has been withholding 10 percent from monthly payments to Durham, which operates the local bus fleet, employs nearly all of the drivers and provides a portion of the buses. In January, that meant Durham missed out on \$137,565 from its invoice amount of \$1,375,650, according to documents provided by the district.

Post and Courier: Stormwater fee hike considered for Charleston County

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160313/PC16/160319778>

Prentiss Findlay

A proposed 61 percent increase in Charleston County's stormwater fee has drawn fire from some elected officials. At stake is the size of an annual bill charged to thousands of property owners in the unincorporated county, plus inside the cities of Folly Beach, Sullivan's Island, Isle of Palms, Lincolnville and James Island. The proposed increase would raise the stormwater fee from \$36 to \$58 for an average home and would help the county comply with federal water quality standards and implement new flood management programs, officials said.

Aiken Standard: Pedestrian safety becoming concern in Aiken County

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20160313/AIK0101/160319769>

Tripp Girardeau

Pedestrian safety is beginning to concern local law enforcement as accidents and deaths involving pedestrians have surged in Aiken County. There was an increase in pedestrian fatalities in Aiken County in 2015-16, compared to 2014, said Lance Cpl. Judd Jones with the S.C. Highway Patrol. "If we have one pedestrian injured, it's too many," said Lt. Jake Mahoney, with the Aiken Department of Public Safety.

Aiken Standard: Congregations support prison outreach with cookies

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20160314/AIK0101/160319787>

Bill Bengtson

Millbrook Baptist and St. John's United Methodist churches were among several congregations in gear to help provide a total of about 6,000 cookies for Kairos Prison Ministry, which serves in prisons around the state and will have a team this weekend at McCormick Correctional Institution, a maximum-security prison for men. Lehi, confirming that many people are glad to support prison ministry but are not keen on going behind bars, said he shares the message that ministry boosters should "bring dough" – either literally or figuratively – and he will tend to the baking.

Independent Mail: Founder of Marines charity has troubled past in Upstate

<http://www.independentmail.com/news/founder-of-marines-charity-has-troubled-past-in-upstate-2df10d1f-7b87-3480-e053-0100007f37f6-371935171.html>

Kirk Brown

John Simpson had a series of legal and business problems in the Upstate before he moved to Florida and founded the Marines & Mickey charity. Military officials are now investigating the charity and Simpson's claims about his service in the Marine Corps have come under scrutiny. The Naval Criminal Investigative Service is "responding to complaints regarding financial practices" of Marines & Mickey, a spokesman said last week. No charges have been filed.

National News:

Associated Press: Tuesday's Republican primaries could define race _ or not

<http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:9dff96c7392848b382d45c6f223de8af>

Stephen Ohlemacher

Tuesday's primaries could provide a defining moment in the race for the Republican nomination for president — or not. Almost every state that has voted so far has awarded delegates proportionally, so that even the losers could get delegates. But that changes on Tuesday, when party rules say states can start awarding all of their delegates to the statewide winner. Only nine contests are winner-take-all, and three of them are on Tuesday, in Florida, Ohio and the Northern Mariana islands. People will also vote in Illinois, Missouri and North Carolina.

Associated Press: Trump used foreign student labor he pledges to ban

<http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:d5d461d65f9e46b69f7f22c47a86c8d7>

Jeff Horwitz

If elected president, Donald Trump has pledged to scrap a work visa program that brings 300,000 student workers each year to the U.S. Among the businesses that would be forced to stop hiring foreign labor: Trump's own. The visa, known as the J-1, purports to offer a "cultural exchange" and give American businesses access to guest workers' "specialized skills," according to the State Department. Trump says it's simply a conciliatory gesture aimed at corporate interests seeking cheap labor — and he'd replace it "with a resume bank for inner city youth provided to all corporate subscribers to the J-1 visa program." Yet Trump's hotel in Chicago has been a regular user of J-1 visas, according to workers at the hotel and Irish students who worked there.

Associated Press: Louisiana, Mississippi: Thousands of homes damaged in floods

<http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:1258b1d7352145b5a2392466d1f5efa1>

Cain Burdeau

Widespread flooding in Louisiana and Mississippi has damaged thousands of homes, and the risk of rising water prompted additional evacuations Sunday. At least four deaths have been reported in Louisiana amid the flooding that began last week, and the National Guard has rescued nearly 3,300 residents. Two fishermen have been missing for days in Mississippi. On Sunday, President Barack Obama signed an order declaring the flooding in Louisiana a major disaster. The president's declaration triggers federal aid for flood victims. Louisiana Lt. Gov. Billy Nungesser said he was worried that many flood victims had not purchased flood insurance.

Associated Press: Turkey carries out airstrikes after deadly bombing

<http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:d4f4ade2104b406c8d1f691f00bc3780>

Suzan Fraser

Turkey's air force hit Kurdish rebel targets in northern Iraq Monday, hours after a suicide car-bombing in the capital killed 37 people and heightened tensions with the Kurdish rebels. Nine F-16s and two F-4 jets raided 18 positions of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK in the northern Iraq, including the Qandil mountains where the group's leadership is based, the state-run Anadolu Agency reported. Targets hits consisted of ammunition depots, bunkers and shelters.

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