

Title: **Area S.C. senators optimistic about newlegislativesession**
 Author: By The EditorialBoard
 Size: 38.13 column inches
 Myrtle Beach, SC Circulation: 61238



Area S.C. senators optimistic about new legislative session

By The Editorial Board

Three area state senators are optimistic that 2017 could be a year of legislative progress, with a positive impact for Horry County and the Grand Strand. When the General Assembly convenes this month in Columbia, “it will be a new session, a new year and a new atmosphere,” Sen. Luke Rankin of Myrtle Beach told The Sun News Editorial Board. Rankin has served in the S.C. Senate since 1993. Greg Hembree of Little River was re-elected in November to a second four-year term and Stephen L. Goldfinch Jr. was elected a senator after serving in the House.

The new atmosphere to which Rankin alludes is the leadership of Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster, who will become governor if Gov. Nikki Haley is confirmed by the U.S. Senate as ambassador to the United Nations. Haley has bipartisan support and her nomination by President-elect Donald Trump is expected to be confirmed. All three senators expressed optimism for a better working relationship between the legislative and executive branches, Rankin and Gold-

finch being more outspoken on that topic.

“Surely it can’t be any worse,” Rankin says of Haley’s attitude and approach. Goldfinch added that the Horry County “delegation begged Haley to help us with a number of issues, including beach renourishment,” to no avail. Haley has “disdain for anything east of the [Intracoastal] Waterway, including beach renourishment.”

McMaster was the S.C. attorney general before being elected lieutenant governor with Haley in 2014. He became an ally of Haley after running against her in the 2010 Republican primary. She won the governorship and was re-elected two years ago. While Haley served in the House, she has had an off-again, on-again, at times abrasive, approach with legislative leaders.

As lieutenant governor, McMaster has presided over the Senate, so he understands the legislative process, including the give-and-take that can mean progress on such issues as infrastructure and

public education, two of the state’s most pressing problems. Comprehensive funding for highways and bridges includes an increase in the gasoline (motor fuel) tax, thwarted by Haley’s threats to veto such legislation.

Haley did veto legislation that would have placed mopeds and their drivers under the motor vehicle code. Hembree and Rep. Crosby of North Charleston have pre-filed bills for another try. After the Haley veto in 2016, the House overrode but the Senate ran out of time, although there were enough votes to override.

Additional legislative concerns include placement of a constitutional amendment on the ballot to appoint, not elect, the state education superintendent. Reform of how homeowners associations operate is likely to come up again, as well as changes in the criminal code to try and deal with the heroin epidemic. Other area concerns include the state training of law enforcement officers and tightening the dram shop laws to require liability insurance.

Title: WOMEN AT THETOP
Author:
Size: 16.74 column inches
Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



WOMEN AT THE TOP

How can we replace our female leaders?

Female leadership in South Carolina took a real hit in 2016, losing from its ranks trailblazing business leaders and accomplished politicians the Palmetto State must seek to replace, Paula Harper Bethea said.

Two of them died: Cathy Novinger and Judy Davis.

Novinger rose through the ranks of business and utility giant SCANA, operating in "a man's world," said Bethea, who recently stepped down as the S.C. Education Lottery's executive director. Novinger also empowered other women across the state through training and the generous gift of her time, Bethea said. That means she will continue to give beyond her death. "What greater gift is there than that?"

Likewise, Davis blazed a trail at BlueCross BlueShield

of South Carolina. "Always gracious, always genteel - a true leader, just like Cathy," who shared her skills with others, Bethea said.

Also, after 13 years of leading the Columbia Museum of Art, Karen Brosius is leaving the executive director's post for a job in New York. "She brought the arts alive for Columbia ... and (she) did it with her personality, her style, and did it in a humble way," Bethea said.

Gov. Nikki Haley, meanwhile, has been nominated to be the next U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. "Who has ever set a more remarkable example for what a female can do?" Bethea said. Haley has taught in the most unique manner "that women lead differently. We lead with our hearts and our minds." Haley's tenure included remarkable achievements - and horrific happenings, Bethea said. "She taught us that in our darkest hour, we can be our best self. So, she lifted us all. Every one of us."



Bethea

Title: **RACEFOR GOVERNOR**

Author:

Size: 12.71 column inches

Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



RACE FOR GOVERNOR

How many people want to be SC's next governor – and who are they?

This year was supposed to mark the beginning of a crowded 2018 campaign for governor, but Gov. Nikki Haley's nomination to be UN ambassador threw that timeline into confusion.

Haley's move to the UN means Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster will go from one of several Republicans expected to seek an open seat to an incumbent



McMaster

governor who would likely enter the field as the favorite.

It's unclear who might challenge McMaster in a GOP primary. Freshly re-elected Sen.

Tim Scott has waffled on whether to launch his own bid, saying he hadn't made a final decision but telling reporters last month he was "comfortable" in the Senate and joking he might run "in the year 2090."

Another prospective candidate for the governor's job, Rep. Mick Mulvaney, has been nominated to be President-elect Donald Trump's budget director.

The biggest challenge next year might be filling the lieutenant governor's job. Senate President Pro Tempore Hugh Leatherman, who would be in line for the job, has said he doesn't want it, and it's unclear whether a 2014 constitutional change would allow McMaster to name his own lieutenant governor before the next election.

Title: **Children scream 'just stop' in 911 call from lawmaker's home**
 Author: ASSOCIATED PRESS
 Size: 28.67 column inches
 Greenville, SC Circulation: 113473



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ASSOCIATED PRESS

AIKEN - Children can be heard screaming "just stop daddy" on a 911 call made from the home of a South Carolina legislator accused of beating his wife and pointing a gun at her, local media reported Friday.

Republican Rep. Chris Corley, of Graniteville, is charged with first-degree criminal domestic violence and pointing a firearm at a person. If convicted, the felonies could send him to prison for up to 15 years.

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repeatedly.

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In a later 911 call, a woman identified by the sheriff's office as Corley's mother-in-law asks for deputies to be sent to the home of a man threatening to kill himself. The dispatcher says deputies are already on the way for "some type of disturbance where the father is beating children?"

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That corresponds with the police report released Tuesday, which said Corley's wife took the family to her mother's house across the street after he threatened to kill her, then said he would kill himself. The report said she ran with the children when he

went to the bedroom.

A judge set Corley's bond at \$20,000 and ordered him to not contact his wife. Corley didn't talk about the charges during his brief hearing Tuesday. He's also barred from handling a firearm.

House Speaker Jay Lucas has promised to take action if Corley is indicted. By state law, Corley must be suspended if indicted on a felony charge.

The 36-year-old Republican was easily re-elected to a second term last month with no opposition.

Corley's arrest comes after a legislative session where lawmakers strengthened punishments for domestic violence. Gov. Nikki Haley made it a priority to reduce the state's high rate of women killed by men who know them. Corley voted for the legislation.

Corley may be best known in the House as a staunch defender of the Confederate flag.

During the debate last year on whether to remove the Confederate flag from Statehouse grounds, Corley suggested replacing it with the white flag of surrender.

Title: **SC consultant helped steer rump to surprising election victory**
 Author: BY BRISTOW MARCHANT bmarchant@thestate.com
 Size: 104.62 column inches
 Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



SC consultant helped steer Trump to surprising election victory

BY BRISTOW MARCHANT

bmarchant@thestate.com

The day after Donald Trump's improbable election victory, the president-elect faced the task of forming a new administration to take over the country's executive branch in two months.

Trump needed help, and a

S.C.-based consultant who had been with the Trump campaign from the beginning was there with him.

"At 6 in the morning, we went to bed," said political strategist Ed McMullen of Charleston.

"And, at 8 o'clock, we were back in (Trump) Tower, planning the transition."

The head of McMullen Public

Affairs, McMullen has known Trump for years. The political veteran was one of the first to come on board with the Trump campaign.

McMullen was chairman of Trump's successful S.C. GOP

primary operation, helped plan the Republican National Convention and kept the outsider candidate's ear throughout the general election.

After election night, McMullen stuck around as a member of the transition team and a vice

chair of the Trump inaugural committee.

"The transition begins right after the last convention," McMullen said. "That's when it kicks in, and Mr. Trump asked me to help with the transition."

McMullen's presence helped raise South Carolina's profile with those in Trump's orbit.

"I think the reason why you see so many high-profile posi-

SEE CONSULTANT, 6A

FROM PAGE 1A

CONSULTANT

tions going to South Carolina, whether it's Nikki Haley (as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations) or Mick Mulvaney (as director of the Office of Management and Budget) or Tim Scott and Trey Gowdy on the transition team ... a lot of that has to do with Ed," said Bill Stern, a Columbia real estate developer and friend of McMullen's. "Mr. Trump relies on him, calls him, has meetings with him."

McMullen, a native New Yorker, moved to South Carolina almost 30 years ago with his S.C.-born wife, Margaret Ann, after a stint as an executive with the conservative Heritage Foundation think tank.

McMullen went on to chair the S.C. Policy Council, later working for a string of political and corporate clients before he was approached by Trump about working on his fledgling campaign.

"Bringing him in early was an adrenaline shot of credibility," said Robert Cahaly, a pollster and senior strategist for the Atlanta-based Trafalgar Group. "In his years at the Policy Council, he had established himself in the conservative community."

HIDDEN VICTORY

McMullen credits his staff with organizing South Carolina "like a combat zone," leading to Trump's 10-point win over a crowded field of senators and governors in February's GOP primary.

In turn, McMullen Public Affairs was paid almost \$7,000 by the Trump campaign, according to a spending summary filed with the Federal Election Commission.

McMullen says he was confident in Trump's victory over the more traditional GOP candidates - partly crediting Cahaly's "dynamic" polling at Trafalgar.

"Most pollsters were using the same old list of Republican primary voters, but he created a model of those who were more inclined to vote," McMullen said of Cahaly.

"They did the only S.C. poll that was accurate three days before the primary," McMullen said. "Everybody thought (Florida's U.S. Sen. Marco) Rubio had the momentum, he had all these endorsements. People are consoling me, and I'm seeing the internal polls."

That confidence carried over

into the general election.

As "Clinton was measuring the drapes in the White House ... I knew from the modeling that we were doing exceedingly well in the battleground states," McMullen said. "There was an excitement among Reagan Democrats and independents who wanted someone other than Hillary."

Voters' enthusiasm for Trump became one of the campaign's secret weapons.

"I had Politico and these Washington outlets on our back about our ground game," McMullen said, recalling the S.C. primary. "Rubio had 10 offices in (South Carolina before the primary), and I said, 'Then, he had to staff 10 offices ... while we have people working in the real world.' We had people who did phone-banking from home.

"All these muckety-mucks were talking about their ground game, and Donald Trump ran circles around them."

Cahaly credits much of that success to McMullen.

"There are a lot of people in politics who work 18-hour days," the pollster said. "But there are few who are successful

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 Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564

and willing to work 18-hour days. Ed brings the work ethic of someone who's hungry with the security of being successful."

THE MCMASTER FACTOR

To S.C. Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster, Trump's Palmetto State success was no surprise.

"He called Ed, and the rest is history," said McMaster, who has known McMullen since the Republican's unsuccessful run for the U.S. Senate in 1986.

McMaster thinks so highly of McMullen's abilities that he named him to head his own transition to the governor's office, even as McMullen continues to work with Trump's presidential transition.

"Ed understands the issues, he knows people all across the country, he understands trends," McMaster said. "He sees where we're going as a country."

McMullen also played a role in McMaster becoming the first statewide elected official to endorse Trump.

"Henry was originally for Lindsey Graham, then once (Graham) got out, (McMaster) and I had a great conversation about it," McMullen said, adding McMaster was "heavily courted."



McMullen

McMullen's secret weapon in courting McMaster might have been the lieutenant governor's wife. "Peggy McMaster loves Mr. Trump."

For his part, McMaster remembers McMullen "promoting (Trump) for months" before he met the New York billionaire business mogul for the first time at an August 2015 fundraiser in Greenville – the same event where the wife of S.C. House Majority Leader Bruce Bannister, R-Greenville, famously pulled Trump's hair.

While Peggy McMaster and Trump formed "an immediate friendship," Henry McMaster sized up the New Yorker as a force to be reckoned with.

"I knew he had what it takes to withstand the attacks from the Clinton machine, their allies and the press," McMaster said. "I knew this was going to be the guy. ... (And) Trump was the only one who could speak directly to the people."

'WHATEVER ROLE HE WANTS'

After the election, McMullen spent a week in Washington working on transition issues.

"I was more involved in bringing in key business leaders who can give voice to the president's policies," he said. "We want

people from all across the country to give input into what his presidency looks like."

McMullen also was named one of 10 vice chairmen on the committee planning Trump's

Jan. 20 inauguration – the only one who isn't a billionaire.

"I significantly diminished the net worth of the vice chairmen," he said jokingly.

With Trump preparing to move into the White House, McMullen could have found himself working with the new administration.

"I'm sure he could have whatever role he wants," Stern said.

But with his family and business in the Palmetto State, McMullen isn't interested in pulling up stakes again.

"I told Mr. Trump two years ago ... as long as I do not have to move to D.C., I'll help him any way I can."

Wherever he lives, McMullen says he will stay in touch with the new president.

"He knows I'll give him the unvarnished truth. I'll give him the perspective from the hinterlands," McMullen said. "He has my cellphone if we need to talk."

—
Bristow Marchant:
 803-771-8405, @BristowatHome,
[@BuzzAtTheState](https://twitter.com/BuzzAtTheState)

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Provided

S.C. political consultant Ed McMullen, right, meets with Donald Trump in his Trump Tower office during the campaign. Having known Trump for years, McMullen became an early backer of the mogul's outsider presidential bid.

Title: **Uneasy2015 in S.C. leads to tense trials in 2016, 2017**
 Author: BY JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press
 Size: 63.55 column inches
 Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688



Uneasy 2015 in S.C. leads to tense trials in 2016, 2017

BY JEFFREY COLLINS

Associated Press

COLUMBIA

In South Carolina, 2015 was supposed to be the uneasy year. The state was stunned by a videotaped police shooting of a fleeing black motorist, nine churchgoers killed in a hate crime, and a billion-dollar flood.

But then came 2016.

Along with two exhausting trials from the previous year's killings, South Carolinians endured the fatal school shooting of a first-grader, a serial killer who police said chained a woman inside a container, and landfalling Hurricane Matthew, which flooded the state all over again.

FROM PAGE 1A

STORIES

prison or be executed. And Roof is charged with nine counts of murder in state court, where prosecutors are seeking the death penalty.

MICHAEL SLAGER TRIAL

The murder trial of former North Charleston police officer Michael Slager failed to resolve his fate.

A jury couldn't reach a verdict over several days of deliberation in Novem-

ber after weeks of testimony on Slager's shooting of Walter Scott, an unarmed black motorist who tried to run from a traffic stop in April 2015.

Slager said he feared for his life because Scott grabbed his Taser as he resisted arrest. African-American community leaders said that was no excuse to fire eight shots at the back of a man who was nearly 20 feet away.

State prosecutor Scarlett Wilson promised another

turmoil, she accepted President-elect Donald Trump's appointment to be ambassador to the United Nations, and plans to resign once the U.S. Senate confirms her appointment.

Here is a look at the stories that shook South Carolina in 2016:

DYLANN ROOF TRIAL

The outcome was never in doubt. Dylann Roof's lawyers didn't dispute he killed nine black worshippers in

a Charleston church in June 2015. And

jurors took less than two hours earlier this month to find him guilty of 33 charges, including hate crimes.

Roof's saga will go on

into 2017. The same jurors who convicted him return Jan. 3 to decide whether he should spend his life in

SEE STORIES, 4A

murder trial of Slager, who also is charged in federal court with violating Scott's civil rights.

UPSTATE TRAGEDIES

Within five weeks, Upstate South Carolina dealt with a pair of stunning crimes.

First, a 14-year-old boy shot and killed his father, then drove to Townville Elementary School in Anderson County and shot at first-graders out for recess. Six-year-old Jacob

Hall died a few days later.

Prosecutors are still deciding whether to ask to try the teen as an adult.

In November, Spartanburg County suddenly discovered they may have had a serial killer living among them. Real estate agent

Todd Kohlhepp was arrested after a woman was found chained in a con-

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tainer on his property, authorities said.

Within days, Kohlhepp confessed to killing seven people – the chained woman’s boyfriend, another couple and four people at a motorcycle shop in 2003, authorities said.

HURRICANE MATTHEW

The massive Category 4 storm weakened before brushing the South Carolina coast in October, but it was still powerful enough to kill five people, mostly because of floods

caused by up to a foot of rain in the northeast part of the state.

Beaufort County also was hard hit, with thousands of trees knocked down and exclusive gated communities thinking about charging residents thousands of dollars each to cover cleanup costs.

NEW GOVERNOR

Donald Trump’s victory in the presidential race shook up South Carolina politics in ways that may be felt for the next decade.

Haley’s acceptance of the U.N. ambassador job likely will elevate Trump’s first and biggest South Carolina supporter, Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster, to the governor’s office.

That means McMaster can run as

an incumbent for what was expected to be an open governor’s seat in 2018. Already, potential candidates for that race are changing plans. As for who takes McMaster’s job, that dispute will likely be decided in the state Supreme Court.



Roof



MIC SMITH AP

Former North Charleston Police Officer Michael Slager, center, walks from the Charleston County Courthouse on Dec. 5 during a break in the jury deliberations in his trial.



Kohlhepp

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Haley



McMaster



Title: **Children scream 'just stop' in 911 call from lawmaker's home**
 Author: Associated Press
 Size: 35.65 column inches
 Hilton Head Island, SC Circulation: 20015



GRANITEVILLE

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Associated Press
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"No, no, no," she responds. "He beat his wife, and he's threatening to kill himself."

That corresponds with the police report released Tuesday, which said Corley's wife took the family to her mother's house across the street after he threatened to kill her, then said he would kill himself. The report said she ran with the children when he went to the bedroom.

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bond at \$20,000 and ordered him to not contact his wife.

Corley didn't talk about the charges during his brief hearing Tuesday. He's also barred from handling a firearm.

House Speaker Jay Lucas has promised to take action if Corley is indicted. By state law, Corley must be suspended from the House if indicted on a felony charge.

The 36-year-old Republican was easily re-elected to a second term last month with no opposition.

Corley's arrest comes after a legislative session where lawmakers strengthened punishments for domestic violence. Gov. Nikki Haley made it a priority to reduce the state's high rate of women killed by men who know them. Corley voted for the legislation.



Corley

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 Author: Associated Press
 Size: 35.65 column inches
 Beaufort, SC Circulation: 11269



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Corley

Title: **Corruption probe should have effect on legislative process**
 Author:
 Size: 56.42 column inches
 Kershaw, SC Circulation: 4000



Corruption probe should have effect on legislative process

The indictment this week of prominent Republican Rep. Jim Merrill has cast another pall on a General Assembly so fraught with challenges that some wonder if anything much will get done in 2017.

Real progress, they say, doesn't need another stumbling block from lawmakers constantly looking over their shoulders, perhaps reluctant to do much as a Statehouse corruption probe is sure to widen. First came the 2014 downfall of former House Speaker Bobby Harrell of Charleston. Now comes Merrill's indictment on 30 charges.

But others point to the plentiful, good people in the legislature who will treat what's happening now as a hiccup. Our state, they say, will keep moving forward on tax reform, pension reform and more money for state highways.

Regardless, lawmakers would like any other corruption-related developments to be announced before January's session arrives. If integrity questions hang in the air for weeks — as they did in the early 1990s in the Statehouse sting known as Operation Lost Trust — forward movement could be fleeting.

"The House came to a halt when some of that stuff was going on," one former legislator recalled this week. "That group sucked a lot of oxygen out of the air waiting for the next shoe to drop."

In Lost Trust, federal officials indicted 28 legislators and lobbyists on corruption charges stemming from a sting that involved lawmakers taking as little as \$300 in return for pledges to support a bill to

legalize gambling on horse racing. When all was said and done, 27 of the 28 pleaded guilty or were found guilty.

During the turmoil, state lawmakers overhauled lax state ethics laws to thwart a culture of corruption. They voted to bar lobbyists, who once cozier up to legislators with dinners, booze and trips, from being able to donate to campaigns or even buy a cup of coffee for legislators.

As years passed, loopholes developed. Rules got stretched. Coziness returned in new guises. Ethics reform proponents started calling for revamping the rules, once considered a model for state legislatures. But thanks to national trends for accountability and transparency, other states passed tougher rules. But improved ethics standards seemed to bypass South Carolina as bills died after much agonized debate.

The League of Women Voters' Lynn Teague of Columbia wrote this in Statehouse Report after reform measures failed in 2015: "Without reform, secret 'consulting fees' will continue to buy the support of our officials. Without reform, some public officials will continue to adhere to their own private high standards of integrity but those without a strong moral compass (and there are far too many) will continue to work for their own benefit rather than that of South Carolina's citizens."

Fortunately, time caught up with the legislature and it has nudged toward reform, in part because of a continuing drumbeat by Gov.

Nikki Haley for more transparency. (Interestingly, some are wondering why Merrill has been indicted for things that sound similar to what Haley was accused of as a House member, but given a pass on.)

In June 2016, state legislators took two big forward steps in updating ethics laws when they transformed the state Ethic Commission into a truly independent agency that now can investigate state lawmakers for possible improprieties. Previously, that function was left to House or Senate ethics committees. Also, legislators approved measures to require members to disclose sources of private income, a long-sought reform to promote transparency.

But they didn't deal with so-called unreported "dark money" in which millions of dollars of contributions from donors attempting to influence elections go to "leadership" political action committees and other organizations.

State legislators have a lot on their plates when they return to Columbia. They desperately need to fix the state's bridges, roads and dams. They have underfunded education for years, creating inequities that are shameful. They expected a better return from pension investments than was economically prudent and now are billions in the hole.

While those things have to be dealt with, they must also fix state-ethics laws to restore public confidence in government. That starts with stronger ethics rules and a culture of integrity at the Statehouse.

Title: **Corruption probe should have effect on legislative process**

Author:

Size: 56.42 column inches

Kershaw, SC Circulation: 4000

house Report. Have a comment? Send to:
feedback@statehoureport.com.



Andy Brack
The Statehouse Report

Title: **LC Sheriff Tabbed By Haley For Training Council**
 Author: Kershaw News-Era From Release
 Size: 59.98 column inches
 Kershaw, SC Circulation: 4000



LC Sheriff Tabbed By Haley For Training Council

Kershaw News-Era
From Release

Lancaster County Sheriff Barry S. Faile has been appointed by South Carolina Governor Nikki R. Haley to the South Carolina Law Enforcement Training Council. His term began Nov. 29, 2016, and he will serve at the pleasure of the governor.

All law enforcement officers in this state must be trained and certified by the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy. When it created by statute the South Carolina Law Enforcement Training Council, the General Assembly indicated its intent was "to maximize training

opportunities for law enforcement officers and criminal justice personnel, to coordinate training, and to set standards for the law enforcement and criminal justice service, all of which are imperative to upgrading law enforcement to professional status."

The training council has many powers and duties including developing police training programs and standards, publishing training materials, making regulations related to training, and training and certifying candidates for law enforcement positions.

For example, in

2015 the training council conducted hearings across the state to develop guidelines for the use of body-worn cameras by law enforcement agencies. Those guidelines formed the basis for body-worn camera policies the agencies were required to implement. The training council also reviewed and had approval authority over those policies.

The training council has 11 members, including the South Carolina Attorney General; the Chief of the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division; the heads of the Departments of

Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services, Corrections, Natural Resources, and Public Safety; and two sheriffs, two police chiefs, and one detention director.

"I am honored to have been appointed to the South Carolina Law Enforcement Training Council by Governor Haley," said Sheriff Faile. "Training and professionalism in law enforcement have never been more critical. The training council plays a vital role in ensuring that we provide the best and most up-to-date training possible to the men and women who protect us."

Title: **LC Sheriff Tabbed By Haley For Training Council**
 Author: Kershaw News-Era From Release
 Size: 59.98 column inches
 Kershaw, SC Circulation: 4000



The Kershaw Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting last week for downtown business The Owl's Nest. From the left are chamber members Danny Williams, Spencer Briggs, Tyler

Reeves, Owl's Nest staffers Matthan Sowell, Megan Roberts, owner Jessica Sowell, and chamber members Sheila Hinson and Lynda Watson. Photo by David Kellin.