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Governor Nikki Haley News:

Post and Courier: Medicaid Enterprise Systems Conference wraps in North Charleston

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130912/PC1610/130919744/1009/medicaid-enterprise-systems-conference-wraps-in-north-charleston&source=RSS>

Lauren Sausser

Politicians have been debating the value of Medicaid for decades. Why won't South Carolina expand it? Who deserves to qualify for it? Should poverty entitle the poorest among us to government-subsidized health insurance? But the 2013 Medicaid Enterprise Systems Conference, which ended Thursday in North Charleston, was decidedly apolitical. Over five days, about 1,200 health care experts from around the country discussed how Medicaid in each state can be improved and how technology can facilitate those improvements.

Note: Gov. Nikki Haley, who spoke at the conference on Monday before attending an international car show in Germany, opposes expansion partly because she said Medicaid already costs too much. "We all recognize that half the states represented in this hall are expanding Medicaid and half are not," Haley said Monday. "What I did not see on your agenda for the next few days, however, was lots of hand-wringing and debate about these differences. What I did see was a lot of hard work and attention paid to implementing better systems that produce better health at lower cost, regardless of your state's decisions. We have to keep this as our focus."

Opinion / Editorial Roundup:

Florence Morning News: State parks are great resource; we hope they stay that way

http://www.scnow.com/opinion/editorials/article_1b3cbfa2-1bf5-11e3-8c45-001a4bcf6878.html

Editorial

Forty-seven parks and more than 80,000 acres of diverse Palmetto landscape make up the state's parks system. The Upstate lays claim to more of a third of them, but there are still quite a few in our backyard worth exploring. And they are easier to explore now, too. The South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism recently issued the first update to the state park brochure that has been published in 10 years courtesy of donations from Fuji Film and BMW.

Note: Gov. Nikki Haley said she wanted to see the system — which cost about \$24 million in 2011 to operate according to the director of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, which is leaving the system several million in the red — become self-sufficient by the end of this year.

Greenville News: Great Recession's pain lingering

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130913/OPINION/309130003/Editorial-Great-Recession-s-pain-lingering>

Editorial

Five years ago the country was in the throes of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. September 2008 is when Lehman Brothers collapsed, and the month ended with a stock market collapse that coincided with Congress' failed first vote on the Troubled Asset Relief Program on Sept. 29. It was the month when it became painfully evident to most Americans that the Great Recession was, indeed, more than just another economic hiccup. Five years later, there still is a debate over whether the country has turned the corner. Even the engineers of the government efforts to mitigate the collapse warn we are not out of the woods, according to a recent USA Today report.

Post and Courier: Continuing shame of Benghazi

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130913/PC1002/130919721/1021/continuing-shame-of-benghazi>

Editorial

September 11 was a day of remembrance for those killed in the 2001 terrorist attacks on America. But it was also the anniversary of a brutal terrorist attack on a U.S. mission in Benghazi during which four Americans, including Ambassador Christopher Stevens, were killed. The tragic Benghazi outcome was a consequence of indefensible decisions not to secure the mission, taken at the State Department and elsewhere in government, for which no one has been held responsible. And the failure of the administration to take effective action while the mission was under a six-hour siege was an indictment of its readiness to respond to the legendary “3 a.m. call,” which in this case came shortly after midnight.

Post and Courier: Solar farm – feel the power

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130913/PC1002/130919722/1021/solar-farm-x2014-bring-on-the-power>

Editorial

There's a growing demand for solar power in South Carolina, and it appears the industry is beginning to respond. Santee Cooper and Central Electric Cooperative plan to build a 20-acre solar energy farm near Walterboro — a welcome step toward increasing the state's renewable energy. It will be the largest in the state, and as such should raise people's awareness of, and whet their appetite for, solar energy. The solar industry, particularly in South Carolina, which has some of the country's most restrictive laws governing it, is still in its infancy. Only 1 percent of the state's power is generated from renewables like sun and wind.

Aiken Standard: New safety systems positive step for schools

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20130913/AIK0201/130919801/1018/AIK02/editorial-new-safety-systems-positive-step-for-schools>

Editorial

New buzzer and camera systems at Aiken County schools appear to be a small, but effective step toward helping to ensure safety in the classroom. Although there were concerns that parents would consider it an inconvenience, school officials have received a number of compliments on it, according to Deputy Superintendent David Caver. The new safety systems help to ensure the right individuals are coming through the doors each school day. Aiken High School began using the new system on Tuesday, and plans are in place to implement safety systems at other schools throughout the district. Any new security measures obviously have to be balanced with funding capabilities, but the district has already shown the vision to design the newest schools in the area around safety.

Island Packet: Texting bans should make area roads safer

<http://www.islandpacket.com/2013/09/12/2680570/texting-bans-should-make-area.html#storylink=cpy>

Editorial

Beaufort County is now one of a growing number of communities in South Carolina that have banned texting while driving. It's welcome news. The county joins Beaufort and Hilton Head Island in prohibiting the dangerous practice. Bluffton and Port Royal should pass ordinances, too. The towns can model theirs after the other local ordinances, giving drivers and law enforcement officers a unified set of requirements and penalties.

South Carolina News:

Greenville News: Waste builds at S.C. reactors as new opposition forms for Nevada disposal site

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130913/NEWS07/309130005/Waste-builds-S-C-reactors-new-opposition-forms-Nevada-disposal-site>

Eric Connor

The federal government has spent \$7 billion studying the abandoned Yucca Mountain project, a site in the Nevada desert seen for decades by its backers as the best hope for a permanent graveyard for toxic nuclear waste stockpiling at the Oconee Nuclear Station and across South Carolina. Now, but a fraction of that cost — \$11.1 million — remains, and a recent appeals court ruling mandates that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission find some way to spend it. But should it be spent? And how? Nuclear regulators say they are caught in limbo: Congress hasn't passed a law that says definitively that the project is dead, and the money isn't enough to do anything meaningful.

Greenville News: S.C. attorney general promotes work opposing Washington

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130913/NEWS/309130007/S-C-attorney-general-promotes-work-opposing-Washington>

Mary Orndorff Troyan

A court decision that reinstated Yucca Mountain, Nev., as a candidate for storing nuclear waste marked a legal victory for states over the federal government, South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson said Thursday. "I was happy when a federal appeals court basically said ... this administration ran afoul of the law by withdrawing Yucca's application," Wilson said at the Heritage Foundation in Washington. Wilson was one of four Republican attorneys general who participated in a panel about the battles between states and federal officials over rules and laws involving health care, energy, labor and the environment. South Carolina was among states that filed suit during President Barack Obama's first term when the Energy Department halted its analysis of the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste site in the Nevada desert.

Note: Oconee Nuclear Station and the Savannah River Site in Aiken both store waste. Gov. Nikki Haley, members of the state's congressional delegation, and Duke Energy support the Yucca site.

The State: SRS Cleanup Firm Lays Off 465 Workers

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=yBDo0XPx

Jeff Wilkinson

The contractor hired to clean up high-level radioactive waste at the Savannah River Site near Aiken is laying off 465 of its 2,200 workers. The layoffs come just two weeks after the director of South Carolina's environmental control agency warned the U.S. Energy Department that federal budget cuts could result in hundreds of millions of dollars in fines for not meeting deadlines for the cleanup. In a letter to the employees released to the news media Thursday, Stuart MacVean, interim president and project manager for contractor Savannah River Remediation, said the workers' last day will be Sept 27.

Aiken Standard: SRR to lay off 465 employees at month's end

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20130913/AIK0101/130919774/1007/AIK0101/srr-to-lay-off-465-employees-at-months-end>

Derrek Asberry

Savannah River Remediation is laying off 465 employees later this month as part of its involuntary separation program. According to a letter sent today to Savannah River Remediation workers, the employees' last day will be Sept. 27. Included in the layoffs is employee Russell Overton, the recent winner of the 2013 Voluntary Protection Program Participant's Association Safety and Health Achievement Award. The program's board of directors selected Overton for his model safety and health practices at Savannah River Remediation.

Associated Press: SC, Utah congressmen teaching class at Furman

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=Kxnn9YFy

Three congressmen from South Carolina and Utah are teaming up to teach at class at Furman University this week. U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham and U.S. Rep. Trey Gowdy of South Carolina are being joined by U.S. Rep. Jason Chaffetz of Utah for the course on Friday at Furman's Johns Hall. The three Republicans are giving a guest lecture in Danielle Vinson's "The American Congress" political science class. Organizers say they are giving a guest lecture on a congressional investigation into an attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya. Four Americans were killed in the attack.

The State: SC online schools fear becoming "dumping ground"

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/09/12/2976727/exclusive-sc-online-schools-fear.html#storylink=cpy>

Jamie Self

Leaders of the state's charter school district fear its fledgling online schools are becoming a "dumping ground" for the state's most at-risk students. Students in danger of failure or, in some cases, expulsion are quitting their traditional public schools midyear to enroll in online charter schools – sometimes at the recommendation of guidance counselors and teachers, they say. "Kids say, 'We were told to come to you,'" said Stephanie Cagle, principal of S.C. Provost Academy, a statewide online charter school in its fifth year of operation. "The perception is we're an alternative setting (for students struggling behaviorally), and that can't be further from the truth."

Post and Courier: Oklahoma, South Carolina families at odds in adoption dispute mirroring Veronica case

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130912/PC16/130919713/1006/>

Andrew Knapp

Attorneys in the custody battle for 3-year-old Veronica are eager to see how a similar adoption dispute over an American Indian child plays out after an Oklahoma judge ruled in the new case this week. Desaray, who was born May 13 in Oklahoma, got her Indian heritage from her mother's side of the family, which has been affiliated with the Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma. But the mother offered Desaray for adoption as

she and the birth father parted ways. Some of the circumstances and the players involved mirror those in Veronica's case. A couple from Richland County took the child to South Carolina shortly after her birth. They filed in courts here to adopt the infant, but attorneys for the tribe and the birth father have argued that they weren't properly notified before Desaray was ushered away to the Palmetto State.

Island Packet: Federal whistle-blower says hospitals defrauded Ga. and SC Medicaid

<http://www.islandpacket.com/2013/09/12/2681043/hilton-head-hospital-implicated.html#storylink=cpy>

Tom Barton

Hilton Head Hospital allegedly paid kickbacks to an island clinic that directed expectant mothers living in the U.S. illegally to the hospital as way to increase revenue from Medicaid, according to a recently unsealed federal whistle-blower lawsuit. The lawsuit names Hilton Head Hospital as a defendant, saying that a Medicaid fraud scheme at several hospitals in the Atlanta area also involved the island hospital. Georgia has filed a lawsuit that parallels the federal suit and seeks to recover Medicaid money funneled through the state. A spokesman for S.C. Attorney General's Office said Thursday it was unaware of the federal lawsuit and has no plans for action against Hilton Head Hospital.

Florence Morning News: State Supreme Court rejects putative spouse doctrine

http://www.scnw.com/news/local/article_1a6d87b2-1c0b-11e3-8765-001a4bcf6878.html

Traci Bridges

The South Carolina Supreme Court recently declined to adopt the putative spouse doctrine, ruling it contrary to the state's statutory law and marital jurisprudence. The question was submitted to the state's high court by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in its review of an action involving competing claims to the retirement benefits of the late Thomas Sullivan — a former NFL running back for the Philadelphia Eagles who was married to two women. He married Lavona Hill in Maryland in 1979. The couple separated four years later but never divorced. In 1986, Thomas purported to marry Barbara Sullivan in South Carolina. Records indicate the two obtained a marriage license and that Barbara Sullivan was unaware of Thomas' prior marriage.

Local News:

Associated Press: Lt Dan Weekend getting under way on SC coast

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=Als8Jy8o

A presentation at The Citadel and a concert featuring actor Gary Sinise will mark the upcoming Lt. Dan Weekend in Charleston. During the Citadel dress parade on Friday, part of a floor joist from the World Trade Center will be presented to the military college. More than 150 wounded veterans will be joined by representatives of the New York Fire Department, Charleston Fire Department and the Independence Fund for a series of weekend events. The highlight is the Saturday night benefit concert by actor-musician Gary Sinise and his Lt. Dan Band at Johnson Hagood Stadium.

The State: Benjamin says he'll work full time as Columbia mayor if referendum passes

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/09/12/2976724/benjamin-says-hell-work-full-time.html#storylink=cpy>

Cassie Cope and Dawn Hinshaw

Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin is prepared to quit his job as a lawyer at a local firm to become the city's first full-time mayor, he said Thursday. If voters were to approve a change to the strong-mayor form, Benjamin said he would want to concentrate all of his energies on the new job, which would include managing the city's day-to-day affairs, hiring and firing employees and submitting an annual budget for council's consideration. The city manager currently does those things. Benjamin estimates he works 60 hours a week in the mayor's role already. He receives a \$17,500 salary plus an expense account.

Florence Morning News: D.P. Cooper gets board approval to become charter school

http://www.scnw.com/observer/news/article_0f35e278-1be7-11e3-891b-001a4bcf6878.html

Christopher McKagen

The Williamsburg County School District Board of Trustees gave its conditional approval Wednesday night to allow D.P. Cooper Elementary School to convert from a traditional public school into a charter school. The school has sought the conversion for nearly a year. The decision came after an executive session which followed a public discussion for which hundreds of community members attended. The standing-room only crowd overflowed onto the district office's porch and welcomed the approval with cheers and applause. The school will still be "sponsored" by the district, which means it will ultimately answer to and be aided by the district and need be evaluated each year.

Times and Democrat: USDA grant to provide tech aid to small businesses

http://thetandd.com/news/local/usda-grant-to-provide-tech-aid-to-small-businesses/article_21799076-1c1c-11e3-a56c-0019bb2963f4.html

Minnie Miller

The owner of McMillan's Barber Shop on Main Street in Bamberg is looking to expand his business. James McMillan says Thursday morning's announcement on the courthouse steps of a \$40,000 USDA grant to help small businesses is just the thing he was looking for to help him put his plans into action. McMillan says he plans to tap into the resources that will be provided by the Small Business Technical Assistance Project that the USDA grant will fund. Strategic Capital Solutions will be providing the assistance to existing small businesses in Bamberg County as well as entrepreneurs who want to launch new businesses.

The Item: Tuomey trustees may face personal risk

http://www.theitem.com/news/local_news/tuomey-trustees-may-face-personal-risk/article_fd4ce244-5522-52f8-b04a-0b394532011f.html

Braden Bunch

An opinion from the South Carolina Attorney General's Office says the board members and officers of Tuomey Healthcare System cannot be protected by the hospital from possible fines and penalties should they be found liable in a future lawsuit. In its recently issued opinion, the Attorney General's Office makes it clear it thinks there is no current reason for Tuomey to protect its officials, since they are not named as part of the current federal lawsuit the hospital faces. For the past eight years, the local hospital has been the focus of a federal lawsuit accusing Tuomey of negotiating illegal contracts with doctors that thereby resulted in fraudulent Medicare claims.

Seneca Journal: Duke rate increase approved, takes effect next week

<https://upstatetoday.com/2013/09/duke-rate-increase-approved-takes-effect-next-week/>

Norman Cannada

Duke Energy customers will see an increase in their power bills — starting next week. The South Carolina Public Service Commission (PSC) approved a settlement agreement Wednesday that will increase Duke's revenues by about \$118.6 million over the next two years. The first phase of the increase will go into effect Sept. 18 and will mean a \$7.52 increase to the average monthly residential customer using 1,000 kilowatt-hours a month. The plan calls for rates to increase again Sept. 18, 2014, by \$2.79 for the same residential customer.

Seneca Journal: Seneca gives up control of its elections

<https://upstatetoday.com/2013/09/seneca-gives-up-control-of-its-elections/>

Carlos Galarza-Veve

The Oconee County Elections and Voter Registration Office will not have to add personnel or incur additional costs by taking over control of municipal elections. Elections Director Joy Brooks said Wednesday the complete transfer of municipal elections to her office is a "smart move" that allows for more consistency. "We were already doing the majority of the work anyway," Brooks said. "We spent a lot of time working with the cities, but we had no responsibility. Now we have authority from beginning to end. It's a smart move."

Aiken Standard: Youth Empowerment Center reaches out to rural youngsters in Edgefield County

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20130913/AIK0101/130919786/1007/AIK0101/youth-empowerment-center-reaches-out-to-rural-youngsters-in-edgefield-county>

DeDe Biles

"Just because we don't have something doesn't mean we can't have it" is Marcella Edwards' motto. As the CEO of the Edgefield County Youth Empowerment Center, she is determined to get the at-risk youngsters served by her organization access to all sorts of experiences and opportunities. They've traveled to Aiken County to go swimming in a YMCA pool, and they've visited Morehouse College and Spelman College in Atlanta. They recently were guests at the Atlanta Falcons' training camp and attended one of the National Football League team's preseason games. They've also seen Major League Baseball's Atlanta Braves and the National Basketball Association's Charlotte Bobcats play.

Anderson Independent: Bids on Oconee sewer project within budget

<http://www.independentmail.com/news/2013/sep/12/bids-on-oconee-sewer-project-within-budget/>

Ray Chandler

The lowest bids on installing a sewer line to Oconee County's commerce park near Interstate 85 are within

the amount budgeted for the job, a county official said Thursday. Seven companies, one from as far away as Michigan, bid for the project, with bids ranging from \$7.9 million to \$6.6 million. County officials opened the bids Thursday afternoon. DS Utilities of Little Mountain, S.C., submitted the lowest bid, \$6,602,271.90. The bid was only marginally higher than the next-lowest, that of Don Moorhead Construction of Belton, \$6,606,667.40. The highest bidder was J&M Construction of Anderson at \$7,911,931.

Spartanburg Herald Journal: Local business leader Bob Harley dies at 84

<http://www.goupstate.com/article/20130912/ARTICLES/130919883/1083/ARTICLES?Title=Local-business-leader-Bob-Harley-dies-at-84>

Trevor Anderson

Robert "Bob" Harley was never one to shy away from a challenge, especially where the future of his hometown was concerned. The local business leader, banker, philanthropist and community advocate was always one of the first people to give of his time, energy and expertise to support projects that benefited Spartanburg. But Harley, who died Wednesday night at his east-side home at the age of 84, always shied away from the limelight, choosing to give others the credit rather than taking any for himself. Harley was born on April 28, 1929, the youngest of eight children to the late Cleveland Sylvanus Harley and Lochie Bates Harley. The family lived on South Church Street.

National News:

Washington Post: The fruits of epic incompetence

http://www.theitem.com/opinion/the-fruits-of-epic-incompetence/article_6a0ec1ce-ad74-5116-84a8-6e852ed37d73.html

Charles Krauthammer

The president of the United States takes to the airwaves to urgently persuade the nation to pause before doing something it has no desire to do in the first place. Strange. And it gets stranger still. That "strike Syria, maybe" speech begins with a heart-rending account of children consigned to a terrible death by a monster dropping poison gas. It proceeds to explain why such behavior must be punished. It culminates with the argument that the proper response - the most effective way to uphold fundamental norms, indeed human decency - is a flea bite: something "limited," "targeted" or, as so memorably described by Secretary of State John Kerry, "unbelievably small."

Associated Press: White House pushes back on Putin's op-ed on Syria

<http://www.islandpacket.com/2013/09/12/2680305/white-house-pushes-back-on-putins.html#storylink=cpy>

Deb Riechmann

The White House pushed back Thursday against Russian President Vladimir Putin for his opinion piece in The New York Times that blamed opposition forces for the latest deadly chemical weapons attack in Syria and argued President Barack Obama's remarks about America were self-serving. White House spokesman Jay Carney said the U.S. wasn't surprised by Putin's piece and that Russia is "isolated and alone" in blaming the Syrian opposition for the deadly Aug. 21 attack. Even countries like Iran agree that the Syrian government of President Bashar Assad is responsible, Carney said.

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