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Subject: Morning Clips - Tuesday, December 3, 2013

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

Associated Press: Haley weighs in on Columbia strong mayor election

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=o00uR1dm

Seanna Adcox

South Carolina Republican Gov. Nikki Haley is asking voters in the Democratic stronghold of Columbia to give the mayor more power. Voters in the state's capital city will decide in a special election Tuesday whether to move to a strong mayor form of government, transferring most of the authority held by the city manager to the elected mayor. As in most South Carolina municipalities, Columbia's mayoral and council races are officially nonpartisan.

Note: Haley is backing the strong-mayor push for the same reasons she's fighting for the Republican-led Legislature to transfer more authority and responsibility to the governor's office, Rob Godfrey said. "It is more important that the people we elect have the ability to make decisions and be held accountable - this is the right thing for Columbia, and good things for Columbia mean good things for all of South Carolina," he said.

Associated Press: Haley schedules stops in Gaffney, Rock Hill

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

Gov. Nikki Haley is spending some time traveling around northern South Carolina. On Tuesday, Haley is scheduled to address the Gaffney Rotary Club at its meeting at Limestone College. Later Tuesday, Haley's office says the Republican is holding a news conference about ethics reform at Rock Hill City Hall. The last event on Haley's public schedule for Tuesday is a series of constituent meetings in Rock Hill.

Aiken Standard: New York Times cites local apprenticeship model

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20131203/AIK0101/131209862/0/SEARCH&slid=1>

Rob Novit

As Jordan Dunbar learned more about the partnership of Tognum America and the Aiken County Career Center during the past year, "the more I realized it's an amazing opportunity. I couldn't pass it up." Less than four months into an apprenticeship program at the center, Dunbar has found himself in a video news clip on The New York Times website, along with other Career Center students. A related article also appeared with it in the Times online on Saturday.

Note: Klisch said this latest venture emerged when a Times journalist learned about the Aiken-based program through S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley's office.

Opinion / Editorial Roundup:

Post and Courier: Start legislative session with major agency reform

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20131203/PC1002/131209861/1022/start-2014-with-essential-reform>

Editorial

A new Department of Administration giving more executive authority to the governor would be a major step forward for government accountability and streamlining. Unfortunately, legislation to complete the long-debated restructuring proposal has repeatedly faltered, most recently over differences in House and Senate versions of the bill. Those differences were to be dealt with by a House-Senate conference committee in advance of the next legislative session, and there is still time to do so. Let's hope that the cancellation of today's conference committee meeting isn't a dark portent for next session's reform agenda.

Times and Democrat: S.C should get support vs. feds over SRS waste

http://thetandd.com/news/opinion/editorial/s-c-should-get-support-vs-feds-over-srs-waste/article_24846aca-5ba5-11e3-9218-001a4bcf887a.html

Editorial

THE ISSUE: S.C. as home for waste from weapons making; **OUR VIEW:** Feds have reneged on storage, at least can push ahead with haste on new-tech solutions. South Carolina's faith in the federal government to put safety and the environment ahead of politics in the important solution to permanent storage of high-level nuclear waste was misplaced. The Yucca Mountain permanent repository for high-level waste is at best on hold and at worst is a dead issue with the Obama administration actively opposed.

Island Packet: Charter schools need state help for facilities

<http://www.islandpacket.com/2013/11/29/2821722/charter-schools-need-state-help.html#storylink=cpy>

Editorial

The state's charter schools have long struggled to find appropriate and affordable school buildings. While charter school organizers are not required to include cafeterias, gyms and other traditional elements in their school buildings, the facilities must be handicapped accessible, include sprinkler systems and meet many other safety regulations the same as traditional public schools. But charter schools lack the means to raise money for facilities. They cannot sell bonds and do not receive any funds for capital costs.

Greenville News: Smoking keeps declining in state

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2013312030011>

Editorial

When South Carolina increased its cigarette tax by 50 cents per pack in 2010 the rationale behind the change was that it would encourage people — especially young people with limited incomes — to give up a destructive habit. That alone was good motivation for the tax hike. South Carolina had one of the highest rates of smoking in the nation, and the state had among the highest rates of smoking-related illnesses such as cancer, heart disease and stroke. When South Carolina was pressing for the cigarette tax increase in 2009, the American Lung Association estimated that more than 6,000 South Carolinians died every year due to smoking-related illnesses.

Aiken Standard: Career Center setting a national precedent

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20131203/AIK02/131209896/1018/AIK02/editorial-career-center-setting-a-national-precedent>

Editorial

Seemingly gone are the days of woodshop and autoshop in high schools — put on the cutting block across the country as part of budget cuts and a shift toward college-prep classes. While those courses may be considered relics, the hands-on learning model has thankfully not been lost in South Carolina. Because of the efforts of good corporate neighbors such as Tognum America in Aiken County, local students are garnering much needed job skills that could help reengineer a manufacturing boom in the state.

2014 Campaign Cycle News:

The State: Senate candidates to speak at luncheon without Lindsey Graham

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/12/02/3134840/election-2014-senate-candidates.html#storylink=cpy>

Jamie Self

Three of U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham's four GOP challengers will speak Tuesday at the First Tuesday Republican Club's luncheon in West Columbia. Easley businessman Richard Cash, Orangeburg attorney Bill Connor and Charleston PR executive Nancy Mace are scheduled to participate. State Sen. Lee Bright, R-Spartanburg, will be attending a fundraiser in Tulsa, Okla., on Tuesday. But a surrogate will appear on his behalf, event organizers said. Luncheon organizers said Graham was invited but is not attending.

The State: Lindsey Graham, Palm Beach by day, Seneca Christmas Parade by night

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/12/02/3135334/election-2014-lindsey-graham-palm.html#storylink=cpy>

Jamie Self

U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham attended a "pro-Israel" fundraiser Monday morning, according to Fort Lauderdale's Sun Sentinel, and made it back to his hometown in time for the Seneca Christmas parade. Graham was scheduled to appear at a "pro-Israel reception" Monday morning in Delray Beach at a private residence where entry fetched \$500 a person up to \$5,000 for couples, the Sun Sentinel reported. Florida state Rep. Bill Hager, who lives in Delray Beach, tweeted from the event:

Associated Press: Texas Gov. Perry returns to early primary state

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=zLps4Zft

Texas Gov. Rick Perry is returning to this early presidential primary state to help raise money for the South Carolina Republican Party. Perry is the guest speaker at a GOP reception and dinner Tuesday at the Spartanburg Expo Center. According to the invitation, tickets to the dinner and reception, plus a photo with Perry costs \$250 per person. On Wednesday, Perry is raising money at a lunch in Greenville for the Blue Ridge Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Perry is an Eagle Scout.

South Carolina News:

Greenville News: Talk about health-care alternatives, Scott says

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2013312030021>

Rudolph Bell

U.S. Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina said in Greenville on Monday that he wants to hear more talk about free-market alternatives to the Affordable Care Act. A member of Richland County Council who is running against Scott and a former Obama administration official who may run against him declined to respond to the Republican senator's remarks. Scott made two stops in Greenville -- Bob Jones Academy and The Poinsett Club -- as he seeks election to his first full term next year.

Rock Hill Herald: U.S. Sen. Scott hears from veterans during Rock Hill visit

<http://www.heraldonline.com/2013/12/02/5464295/us-sen-scott-hears-from-veterans.html#storylink=cpy>

Anna Douglas

U.S. Sen. Tim Scott got an earful from frustrated veterans and others on Monday afternoon during a campaign trail stop in Rock Hill. Scott, a Republican, is running in 2014 for one of two South Carolina seats in the U.S. Senate. The state's senior senator, Lindsey Graham, is also running for re-election. Gov. Nikki Haley appointed Scott last year to replace Jim DeMint, who gave up his seat to become president of The Heritage Foundation, a conservative political think-tank.

The State: First hearing planned on proposed SC Medicaid budget hike

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/12/02/3134811/state-house-first-hearing-planned.html#storylink=cpy>

Adam Beam

The S.C. Senate Health and Human Services Committee will hold its first Medicaid budget hearing on Tuesday. Lawmakers spent all of last session debating whether to expand Medicaid under the federal Affordable Care Act. The Republican-controlled legislature decided not to do it, saying it would eventually cost the state too much money. Despite that, Medicaid continues to expand. Lawmakers gave the agency an additional \$110 million in general fund money for the 2014 budget. The agency is asking for an additional \$165 million in the 2015 budget.

Sun News: Pawleys Island group introduces counterplan to DOT's proposed median project

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/2013/12/02/3878108/pawleys-island-group-introduces.html#storylink=cpy>

Claire Byun

Many Pawleys Islands residents are not happy about a proposed S.C. Department of Transportation plan to place medians along Ocean Highway, and one local group is taking action against it. Citizens Coalition for Ocean Highway (CCOH), which boasts the slogan "Don't Strip the Neck," aims to simplify the design of the DOT plan as it works to keep Pawleys Island a cozy, quiet town. CCOH agrees that some changes must be made to traffic in Pawleys Island, but says the DOT's plan for grass medians with U-turn lanes are not appropriate.

Anderson Independent: Federal health-care law is source of confusion in S.C.

<http://www.independentmail.com/news/2013/dec/02/federal-health-care-law-is-source-of-confusion/>

Kirk Brown

Anderson City Council member Beatrice Thompson said she saw firsthand Monday night "why everyone is so confused" about the federal health-care law commonly known as Obamacare. "Many of us are not asking questions because we don't know what to ask," Thompson said. "What is going on with this?" Her comments came during a health-insurance forum that about 25 people attended at Westside Community Center. Thompson is the center's longtime director.

Times and Democrat: County asks lawmakers to dump trash bill

http://thetandd.com/news/local/county-asks-lawmakers-to-dump-trash-bill/article_3e91db38-5bd6-11e3-9efc-0019bb2963f4.html

Martha Rose Brown

Orangeburg County officials have a clear message for the General Assembly: It's time to ditch legislation that would limit counties' control over trash. A "flow control" bill has already been approved by the House. If approved by the state Senate, it would stop local governments from requiring residents and haulers to use government-owned landfills. Orangeburg County on Monday joined a growing number of counties which have formally resolved to oppose the legislation.

Post and Courier: Solicitors want S.C. Supreme Court Justice Beatty kept away from their cases

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20131202/PC16/131209860/1177/solicitors-want-sc-supreme-court-justice-beatty-kept-away-from-their-cases>

Glenn Smith

S.C. Supreme Court Justice Donald Beatty's rant against unethical prosecutors at a recent conference has sparked a push by 9th Circuit Solicitor Scarlett Wilson and her colleagues to get him disqualified from hearing criminal appeals of their cases. Thirteen of the state's 16 solicitors have signed onto a request to have Beatty barred from considering their cases or ruling on grievances against prosecutors. They contend he demonstrated a clear bias against prosecutors in his remarks at a September solicitors' gathering in Myrtle Beach and cannot be counted upon to be impartial in his rulings.

Island Packet: SC Supreme Court Justice Beatty comments fire up solicitors across state

<http://www.islandpacket.com/2013/12/02/2826686/sc-supreme-court-justice-beatty.html#storylink=cpy>

Matt McNab

Solicitors across South Carolina are taking issue with comments made by S.C. Supreme Court Justice Donald Beatty, who criticized what he called prosecutorial misconduct in the 9th Circuit Solicitor's Office at a recent prosecutors conference. The 9th Judicial Circuit covers Charleston and Berkeley counties; the circuit's solicitor is Scarlett Wilson. Duffie Stone, whose 14th Judicial Circuit includes Beaufort County, is among 13 solicitors who have signed a letter written by Wilson to S.C. Attorney General Alan Wilson asking that Beatty recuse himself from criminal appeals coming from the 9th Circuit.

The State: New Clemson president's salary goes before commission

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/12/02/3135248/state-house-new-clemson-presidents.html#storylink=cpy>

Andrew Shain

A S.C. commission will set the salary for Clemson University's new president on Tuesday. James Clements was lured from West Virginia University last month with Clemson trustees agreeing to match his \$775,000 annual salary he earned at Morgantown. The salary from a combination of state and foundation sources will make Clements the highest-paid public college president in South Carolina. The Agency Head Salary Commission, comprised of state lawmakers and three governor appointees, must approve the portion of Clements' salary from state funds, which is about \$297,879.

The State: State panel to settle dispute with medical malpractice claims contractor

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/12/02/3134630/state-house-state-panel-to-settle.html#storylink=cpy>

Adam Beam

The procurement review panel meets this week to settle a dispute between a state agency and an South Carolina-based contractor. The S.C. Patients Compensation Fund -- which pays medical malpractice claims in excess of \$200,000 -- hired Modus21, a Mount Pleasant-based company, to set up a new billing and membership management system. But state officials are unhappy because the new system does not work well. Company officials say they did everything they were asked to do. The Procurement Review Committee -- made up of seven people appointed by the governor -- will try to resolve the dispute.

The State: Bill prefilng starts Tuesday

<http://www.thestate.com/2013/12/02/3135333/state-house-bill-prefiling-starts.html>

Andrew Shain

Let the legislation begin. S.C. House members can prefile bills on Tuesday ahead of the next session of the General Assembly that starts Jan. 14. Representatives also can submit their proposed laws on Dec. 10 -- the same day S.C. state senators can first prefile their bills. The senate can send in legislation on Dec 17 as well. Expect lawmakers to submit a lot of bills to solidify their political positions ahead of a big election year.

The State: Healthcare.gov Improvements Make Information Easier To Find

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=qQgOUq0K

Joey Holleman

Two months after it launched, healthcare.gov on Monday delivered on its promise of easy window shopping.

The improvements made to the troubled website during the weekend included an upgrade of the shopping-without-registering function. Users now can hit the “See Plans Before I Apply” button and bypass the time-consuming registration process. Just provide your state and county and your age plus the ages of your family members to be covered, then click “next.” All of the possible insurance plans in your county pop up.

Local News:

The State: What's At Stake Tuesday: The Strong Mayor Form Of Government

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=nYCM7POn

Clif LeBlanc

After months of heated debate and City Council’s votes and counter votes, Columbia residents motivated to go to the polls Tuesday either will make municipal history or hold fast to the status quo. Some residents argue that they don’t fully understand the implications of a strong-mayor system or how it would differ from the current form of government, led by a hired city manager, which the capital city has had since 1949. Those pushing for change say city leaders have commissioned a blue ribbon panel and have argued the topic for years, while doing nothing.

Greenville News: Greenville looks at ban on hand-held devices while driving

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2013312030019>

Anna Lee

It’s not just texting any more. A new proposal could make Greenville the first city in South Carolina that bans the use of hand-held devices while driving, a move that could include talking, texting and using a GPS. City officials had originally considered a texting ban but said it soon became clear that the problem wasn’t just sending texts but an “epidemic” of people being distracted behind the wheel. “We need to create an environment and a system where we need to provide encouragement for people to have two hands on the steering wheel and two eyes on the road,” said Mayor Pro Tem David Sudduth, who was part of the task force that looked into the issue.

Greenville News: Humanists file injunction in lawsuit against district

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2013312030020>

David Dykes

A humanist group is seeking a preliminary injunction against the Greenville County school district to block district officials from allowing prayers as part of any school-sponsored event or events to be held in churches or other places of worship. The injunction request is part of the American Humanist Association’s lawsuit to prevent a Taylors-area elementary school from holding its fifth-grade graduation ceremonies at North Greenville University, a Christian college, federal court records show. A hearing was scheduled for tday in U.S. District Court in Anderson.

The State: Richland County To Reopen Blythewood Magistrate's Office

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=9sS2Cmus

Dawn Hinshaw

Residents of Blythewood soon will have a magistrate’s office and regional sheriff’s office. Magistrate Josef Robinson will hold court at a newly renovated storefront, at 118 McNulty St., a former hardware store. The date the offices will open have not been announced, but Robinson said he expects it will be after the new year. “I’m really excited about going into the new office and learning the community of Blythewood,” said Robinson, 55, appointed to the bench in May 2011. The county spent just over \$1 million to buy and upfit the property, chief Magistrate Donald Simons said.

The State: Commission to advise city on Bull Street redevelopment

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2013312030025>

Jeff Wilkinson

The Bull Street Commission -- a board intended to advise Columbia City Council on the redevelopment of the former State Hospital project -- held its first organizational meeting on Monday. No action and little discussion took place, but the board will reconvene Jan. 10 with a full agenda. Council member Brian DeQuincey Newman, chairman of the commission, said board members should serve as conduits to the community and the region and together should act as an advisory body for City Council. Redevelopment of the 165-acre Bull Street campus is considered the biggest land deal in modern city history.

National News:

Associated Press: Year-end signups crucial test for health care site

http://www.scnw.com/news/national/article_679cee76-5bb5-11e3-8a25-0019bb30f31a.html

President Barack Obama's new and improved health care website faces yet another test in just a couple of weeks, its biggest yet. If HealthCare.gov becomes overwhelmed by an expected year-end crunch, many Americans will be left facing a break in their insurance coverage. Until now, the main damage from the website's technology woes has been to Obama's poll ratings. But if it chokes again, it will be everyday people feeling the consequences. Some of those at risk are among the more than 4 million consumers whose individual policies have been canceled because the coverage didn't comply with requirements of the new health care law.

Associated Press: Gay weddings become reality in Hawaii with new law

http://www.scnw.com/news/politics/article_9fcad0d6-5b5d-11e3-8283-001a4bcf6878.html

Same-sex couples are taking advantage of Hawaii's newfound aloha for gay weddings. Six couples at a Waikiki resort tied the knot early Monday, exchanging vows side-by-side with one another in front of a few hundred guests shortly after midnight, while even more couples watched and waited their turn. Across town, an openly gay Unitarian minister wed his partner of 15 years in a ceremony attended by clergy who pushed for the new law, plus Gov. Neil Abercrombie, who called the special legislative session that led to the law.

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