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**DHEC makes funding pitch**

Director supports capital improvement requests for Pinewood site

**BY JIM HILLEY**  
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Rep. Murrell Smith, R-Sumter, chairman of the South Carolina House Ways and Means Healthcare Subcommittee, might have felt like the little boy trying to plug a leak in the dike with his finger as he heard Department of Health and En-

requests in the executive budget request, including funding for benefits, infrastructure and electronic medical records, but she said there are many other programs the agency must administer which are underfunded, which can lead to even greater expenses.

She pointed out the state

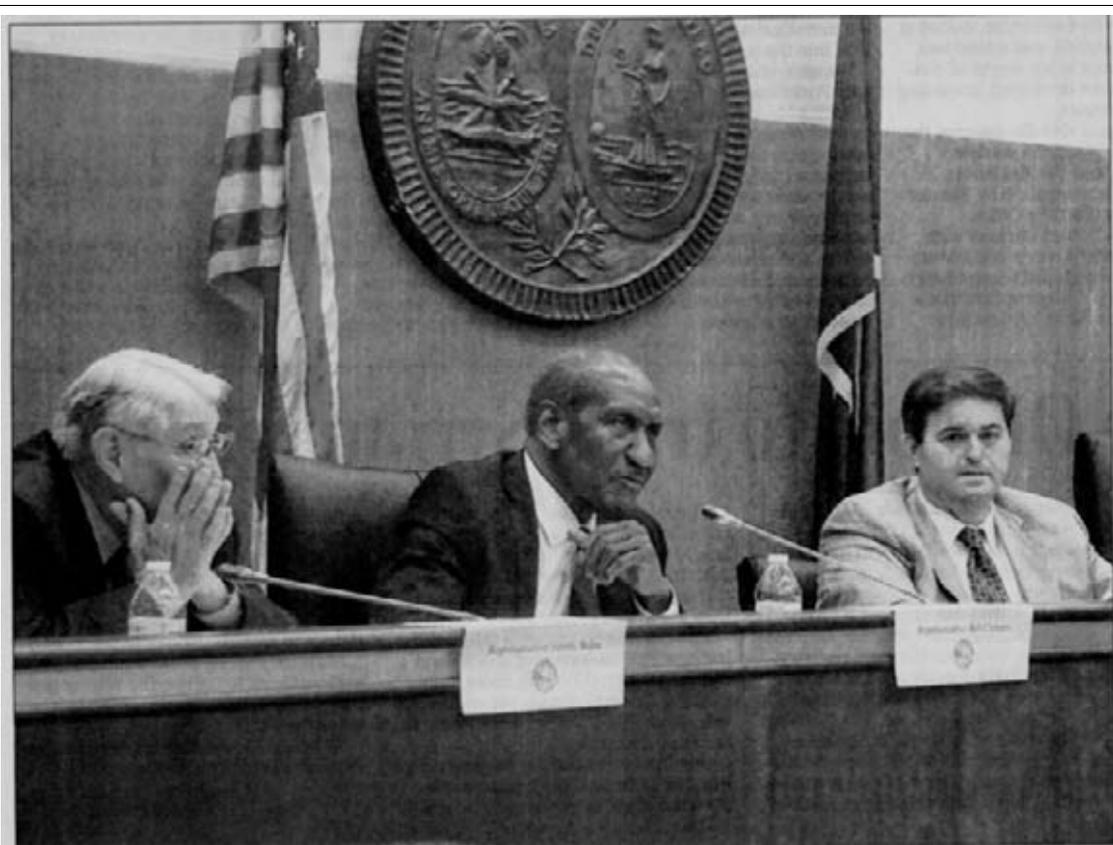
vironmental Control Director Catherine Heigel outline her agency's budget needs Wednesday in Columbia while also endorsing requests for capital improvement funding at the Pinewood Site landfill.

She said she was grateful to Gov. Nikki Haley for including many of her budget

should have been in compliance with the federal mandate for electronic medical records in 2015, but lack of money has meant the state is behind schedule.

"When we were last reviewed, we were told to take steps to get in compliance,"

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JIM HILLEY / THE SUMTER ITEM

Members of the House Ways and Means Healthcare Subcommittee Jimmy Bales, D-Eastover, William "Bill" Clyburn, D-Aiken, and Chairman Murrell Smith, R-Sumter, listen to South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control Director Catherine Heigel as she talks about budget needs for her agency.





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she said.

Failure to get compliant could lead to the state not being reimbursed for the costs, she said.

Heigel also mentioned a mandate created by the General Assembly for a multi-phase stroke treatment program, but the program has never been funded so it has never been done.

She said money meant for vaccination programs had been used to pay for treating tuberculosis patients during an outbreak in Greenwood.

"Costs of the vaccines have gone up, so that funding model is not sustainable," she said.

While her agency budget request did not include funding for capital improvement projects for the Pinewood Site landfill, Heigel told the subcommittee she supports funding for capital improvements at the site requested by Pinewood Interim Administrators Inc., the interim trustee of the toxic waste site. The subcommittee heard those requests earlier in the day.

Smith said the Pinewood Site is something he is very concerned about because it is in Sumter County. He said the trust receives \$4.9 million in annual operating funds but is requesting additional money for the capital improvements.

"Did you see anything abnormal in the requests or anything you consider unnecessary," he asked Heigel.

She replied that DHEC, as a stakeholder, is in agreement with the recommendations.

"Everybody has the same goal," she said. "We want to

keep the environment safe."

She said not only should the site's operational budget be approved but also the capital improvement budget.

Smith complimented Heigel for getting together the stakeholder group that helped develop the items included in the trustee's request.

"Historically, there has been a lot of distrust," he said.

Smith noted that cover improvements for Cell No. 1 at the site was the largest request along with leachate reduction and control.

The trustees asked for more than \$3.2 million for improvements to Cell No. 1 and more than \$500,000 to reduce and control leachate. Leachate is water that has percolated through contaminants and must be treated as toxic waste. The amount of leachate has been increasing at the site leading to increased treatment costs.

"These are time critical issues that need to be addressed," he said.

Heigel said it would be much better to invest incrementally to keep the site maintained rather than waiting for something to fail.

"Then we will be hit with a big bill," she said, comparing it to the lack of funding for dam inspections which proved disastrous at other locations in the October 2015 floods.

The DHEC director said she had many items she would like to request money for.

"My wish list was a whole lot longer than what we put forward," she said.

"We have more needs than we have money," said Rep. Jimmy Bales, D-Eastover. "Cutting revenue doesn't make sense."

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# S.C. Senate takes up road money proposals again

**BY JEFFREY COLLINS**  
The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — South Carolina senators planned to show this week they are serious about passing a bill to get more money to the state's roads and bridges.

A flurry of committee meetings and floor work began Tuesday with a subcommittee trying to approve a bill to change the board that runs the South Carolina Department of Transportation. The meeting ended with senators asking for more time to discuss the proposal.

There are three ideas to changing the board's composition: pick them by the DOT's engineering districts which are geographically compact and respect county lines but have large swings in population; pick them by the state's 10 council of governments, which would increase the size of the board; or maintain the current structure of congressional districts, which are equal in population but have meandering borders.

After that is determined, senators have to decide if legislators should keep appointing the DOT board or the governor should pick her own nominees.

Support seemed to swing toward engineering districts be-

cause so much of DOT is already organized that way. But Sen. Gerald Malloy, D-Hartsville, asked for more time to talk to other senators before passing a plan.

Senate Majority Leader Harvey Peeler begrudgingly agreed, but pointed out the Senate Finance Committee is meeting at 3 p.m. Tuesday and fellow Republicans likely want to know who will be running DOT before promising to give them any more money by raising the gas tax.

Peeler, Gov. Nikki Haley and other Republicans said a road bill must change the DOT's board and have a comparable tax cut if gas taxes are raised.

The DOT said an extra \$1.2 billion a year is needed to get all of South Carolina's roads to good condition, but less money could still be quite helpful to a road network struggling to keep its pavement and bridges from falling into poor condition.

Peeler isn't ready to commit to how much money he wants to raise for roads but said it is directly tied to how much taxes are cut.

"As much as we can possibly squeeze," Peeler, R-Gaffney, said when asked for an amount. "I think the tax reduction will dictate how much we raise."



**Magistrate Cartwright addresses Rotary Club**

Removing some of the mystery as to how our criminal justice system works, Cheraw Magistrate Tessa Cartwright spoke to Rotarians at the January meeting of the Cheraw Rotary Club Wednesday, January 13.

Cartwright, who is the designated Cheraw Magistrate, informed club members about the role of the Magistrate, often called the gatekeeper of the entire

criminal justice system, noting that all criminal indictments are first examined by a Magistrate. While the jurisdiction of the Magistrate in criminal matters is limited to thirty days in jail, even capital murder cases begin with a warrant that must first be approved by a Magistrate.

Cartwright said that most matters involving citizens are civil in nature and

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**Standing left to right are: Chesterfield County Coroner Kip Kiser, Magistrate Tessa Cartwright and Cheraw Rotary Club President Taylor Fisher.**

include such matters as landlord-tenant, claim and delivery, restraining orders and small claims. "I am not Judge Judy," said

Cartwright, "but the idea is the same here". She said that citizens can file claims if the amount sought is no more than \$7500.00. Those





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cases are usually tried without a jury and the parties in small claims court do not need an attorney.

Driving under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicants, commonly called DUI, is one of the offenses that receive close scrutiny. According to Cartwright there are enhanced enforcement efforts by law enforcement from time to time and that changes in the law two years ago make it a much tougher offense. "Since the passage of Emma's Law last year, anyone convicted of DUI with a blood alcohol concentration in excess of

.15 must install an ignition interlock device on their automobile for six months", said Cartwright.

Magistrate Cartwright was born in Columbia and moved to Chesterfield at age 6 where her father coached the Chesterfield High School Rams. She received a BA in Education from Coker College and is married to Ganem Cartwright. They are parents of one son, K.C. who is 14. Cartwright was appointed Magistrate by Governor Haley in April, 2010, on the recommendation of Senator Vincent Sheheen.

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*Emergency readiness, response efforts top D29 meeting*

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In light of last month's bomb threat, Williston District 29 is working to improve its readiness for emergencies.

Superintendent Dr. Misoura Ashe thanked Sheriff Ed Carroll and the other law enforcement officers who responded for their "quick response" after an unidentified 16-year-old student called in a bomb threat. "I'm glad it's over," she said.

The sheriff has met with Ashe and other members of the district leadership team to improve their safety plan. These meetings will continue, she said.

"We want to ensure the welfare of all," said Ashe.

That's why they have also formed a safety committee of district employees to upgrade the emergency safety manual. Committee member Amy Nix told the school board at their Jan. 26 meeting that there are scenarios that can be expanded to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

The committee plans to meet with more staff members this week.

Board Chairman Michael Hutto said he was impressed with the response and how district employ-

ees organized and worked together. "It was awesome to see everyone come together."

The board also heard their annual audit report from David Enzastiga of the Rish & Enzastiga firm.

Enzastiga said the district ended the last fiscal year on June 30, 2015 with \$138,309 less in their general fund balance – or reserves.

This was due to having \$7,166,082 in expenditures but only \$7,007,407 in revenue, according to the audit report. Less local tax revenue played a part in this, he said.

However, the district still has a general fund balance of \$2,060,043. This equates to enough money to operate the district for approximately three-and-a-half months, which is within the recommended amount.

"We are financially healthy," said Enzastiga.

The district had no outstanding long-term debt as of the end of the fiscal year, but had \$256,357 in general obligation bonds, which finance director Charles Everhart said will be paid back in March.

No significant deficiencies or material weaknesses were identified in the audit.

The board also heard updates from several depart-

ment directors.

**Curriculum**

Dr. Carol Lenderman, director of curriculum, instruction and accountability, highlighted some of the changes in state testing.

"There are a lot of changes still happening in South Carolina," she said.

One change concerns the standardized test third through eighth graders will take for math and English language arts. While students took ACT Aspire last year, the state awarded the contract for a new test called SC READY.

This test's writing section is very different from previous ones as it uses text-dependent analysis. Students will read a piece of text or passage and then write an essay using evidence from the text to answer a question. It is not timed like ACT Aspire was.

"We were a little nervous about that one," said Lenderman, who is working with teachers so students will be prepared.

Lenderman also discussed changes to the teacher evaluation system. Implementation has been delayed until the 2018-19 school year. A requirement where 20 percent of a teacher's evaluation would depend on student growth has been removed.

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**Technology**

Director of Technology Don Wical announced the district is now completely wireless.

This was a major part of the district's technology plan, which will be updated in March or April.

The project did not cost taxpayers a penny. Seventy percent of the project was paid with federal money from an e-rate program while the rest came from Gov. Nikki Haley's initiative to improve technology in small school districts, said Wical.

**Transportation**

The district recently received a new school bus with air conditioning, which

Chantane Tobin, the transportation director, said they did not have before.

The bus is slightly smaller than most in their fleet, but

it is a welcome relief with the air conditioning. She told the board she would like to replace two of their four aging activity buses.

She said all bus drivers are current on required physicals and assessments.

Tobin had a chance to discuss transportation issues with state senators

last year.

**Student/Special Services**

Dr. Tasha Louis-Nance, who is in her first year as director of student and special services, said they have been working diligently to be in compliance.

Recent initiatives include developing a manual for special services, getting all employees certified in non-violent crisis intervention, and increase the number of students who are in the talented and gifted program.



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***Provide state aid now for SC Flood Victims***

The damage left by last October's 1,000-year flood has caused an unprecedented \$12 billion in damages to our state and left thousands with destroyed or damaged homes, as well as significant damages to local businesses. We haven't witnessed anything similar since the devastation caused by Hurricane Hugo in 1989.

Some 96,829 South Carolinians have registered for FEMA disaster aid, with \$74 million dollars being approved. However, disaster relief continues well beyond the initial weeks and months after the storm strikes, and a large number of flood victims report that while the aid from FEMA was helpful, it wasn't enough to cover the cost for damages sustained. Many South Carolinians are still displaced from their homes, or living in severely damaged homes, even after receiving federal aid. The flood wreaked havoc on 24 counties across the state, ranging from counties in the Pee Dee to the Lowcountry to the Midlands. The floodwaters did not discriminate and neither should the state of South Carolina when it comes to recovery relief efforts. The recovery process will be a long, painful, and expensive process for many families and individuals across the state. Leaders in Columbia have a responsibility to ensure that impacted communities get back on their feet and are able to make a full recovery.

I have pre-filed a bill solely

focused on helping families and individuals fully recover from the damages left by the flood. My bill allocates immediate funds through a supplemental appropriations to the FY 2015-2016 budget, and would designate over \$320 million in aid for families and individuals living in counties impacted by the storm. These funds are in the Contingency Reserve Fund, and 2015-16 unobligated projected surplus revenue that has been certified by the Board of Economic Advisors.

To be clear, the state has surplus revenue sitting in a bank account right now that we can use to help flood victims immediately.

In accordance with Section 25-1-440 of the 1976 Code, the Governor has the authority to make financial grants up to \$16,000 per family or individual, to assist with disaster-related needs once the President of the United States has declared a county or community a disaster area. On October 5, 2015, President Obama signed a disaster declaration for the state of South Carolina, and ordered federal aid to supplement state and local recovery efforts.

Put simply, the Governor now has the authority to make financial grants to flood victims. My bill gives her the money to send aid now. In addition, my legislation speeds up the recovery process, and helps plug gaps existing between what flood victims may have received in federal aid and insurance coverage, which many victims have reported as being not

enough.

Thus far, Governor Haley has refused to spend any state surplus money to help families and individuals recover. Instead she has decided to rely solely on charities and existing federal relief. While I applaud the state's private sector for their efforts to helping in the recovery process, the private sector alone cannot fully address the billions of dollars in damages we face throughout the state. Furthermore, the impact of the flood stands to impact future charitable contributions because those that traditionally give, now have to focus their attention on their homes or businesses. How can state leaders ignore the thousands of people in our state that FEMA could not help enough? If the General Assembly decides to use state money to help flood victims through another means, those funds would not be available until the new fiscal year that begins July 1. I believe that is entirely too long for flood victims to wait. My bill provides immediate help, using funds already available in existing budget appropriations. I strongly encourage everyone living in counties designated as disaster areas to call Governor Haley's office at 803-734-2100, and urge her to support H. 4569. Tell Governor Haley to do her duty and provide immediate recovery aid that is sorely needed by many across the state. The storm is not over for thousands of South Carolinians. It is time we call and tell the Governor to send help now!

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**Local legislators respond to hospital closure**

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Barnwell County's two state representatives met with displaced employees of Southern Palmetto Hospital after it closed last week.

"This is devastating for where we live," said Rep. Justin Bamberg, whose district includes a small portion of the county.

He said he wanted to come to the hospital Jan. 21 – the day it closed – to meet the employees and hear their concerns. "It puts faces to a problem," he said.

"I care about the people," some of whom have worked there for decades, said Rep. Lonnie Hosey, who was shocked to hear of the news that the county's only hospital was closing. "This is a tragedy for our community."

"I dislike how it went down," added Bamberg of

how less than two days' notice was given.

Bamberg knows the importance of easy access to medical services in an emergency. "Just a few months ago, a cousin of mine was involved in a very bad motor vehicle accident out in the country. They got him

to the helipad and unfortunately he wasn't stable enough to be flown out. He had to be transported 40 minutes to the closest hospital and he died along the way," he said.

He said the same thing could happen in Barnwell County now that the trip to the hospital will take longer. "That's sad because it doesn't have to be that way. I want to do everything I can to mitigate the damage."

U.S. Rep. Joe Wilson, who represents Barnwell County, said he was "sad and disappointed" to learn of the hospital's sudden closure after it provided jobs and

helped families for more than 60 years. "This is yet another example of how the President's healthcare takeover has failed both patients and providers," he said.

Bamberg and Hosey, who are both Democrats, said the closure is part of a greater problem in South Carolina,

citing how Bamberg and Marlboro County hospitals have closed in recent years.

"This is a reflection of the trend to disregard rural South Carolina in the realistic healthcare problem we have," said Bamberg, who is baffled Gov. Nikki Haley's State of the State

speech last week failed to mention healthcare. "How is that possible?"

He and Hosey believe the expansion of Medicaid would help the rural healthcare crisis, but said the Republican governor has refused to do so. They believe that should be a

priority or hospital closures will continue across the state. Bamberg said there are 300,000 uninsured South Carolinians who could be eligible for Medicaid.

However, Wilson, a Republican, disagrees. While federal money would be provided, he said that would only lead to "free money" being taken away and a bigger bill for the state.

Though they have different opinions on how to fix the problem, Bamberg, Hosey and Wilson all hope a solution is found to provide access to healthcare for residents.

"I hope Barnwell County can work with local and state officials to look for ways to improve healthcare in rural communities. For example, in the past, there was a proposal to merge the hospitals of Barnwell and Bamberg—that would have been a positive option," said Wilson.

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S.C. Rep. Justin Bamberg, right, speaks with three laid off Southern Palmetto Hospital employees during a visit to the hospital on its last day.

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**OTHER VOICES: EDITORIALS FROM ACROSS THE STATE**

**The Herald of Rock Hill on the certificate of need process:**

With the need to fix state roads and reduce the inequity in public education, the Legislature may have too much on its agenda to get around to streamlining the certificate of need program.

But, as the endless dispute over who gets to build a hospital in Fort Mill indicates, the program needs to be overhauled.

Discussion of the proposal was sparked by a recent letter from the Federal Trade Commission and the U.S. Department of Justice recommending that South Carolina repeal its certificate of need laws. Gov. Nikki Haley, who supports getting rid of CON, had requested the opinions from the federal agencies.

They said the CON process creates barriers to entry and expansion of health care facilities, and allows existing providers to block competition. The agencies said the process doesn't help control costs or improve the quality of health care.

York County residents are fully aware of the faults of the CON program. Piedmont Medical Center and Carolinas HealthCare System have been mired in a legal battle to build a Fort Mill hospital for nearly a decade, and the issue has yet to be resolved.

The current rules requiring an

extended review process by the state Department of Health and Environmental Control, followed by appeals through the Administrative Law Court, are ridiculously unwieldy. The appeals process regarding the proposed Fort Mill hospital already has dragged on for two years — and counting.

Last year, the full S.C. House passed a bill that would ease the rules on building or expanding hospitals and eliminate the state's oversight entirely at the start of 2018. The bill, which passed 103-1, would let existing hospitals, medical centers and nursing homes add beds within a mile of their sites.

It also would allow hospitals to expand services that already are approved under the program and remove the need to seek permission to buy costly equipment such as X-ray machines or MRI scanners.

But the bill stalled in the Senate, where its future is uncertain. The Senate's Medical Affairs subcommittee voted this month to remove the sunset provision that would end state oversight in 2018. But the bill still must clear a number of procedural roadblocks, and it is uncertain when, if ever, it might come up for debate.

We like the idea of streamlining the process, but we could not endorse ending state oversight altogether. There are good reasons not

to simply allow the free market to dictate how health care is dispersed in the state.

As officials with the S.C. Hospital Association noted, it's unfair to apply free-market rules to an industry where up to 60 percent of hospital revenue comes from federal or state sources — and those sources set the prices they pay. The association also fears that eliminating the CON process would end protection for safety-net hospitals that deliver basic health care to thousands in the state.

With no regulation, we likely would see rapid expansion of health care facilities in urban areas and abandonment of rural, less-populated parts of the state. Investors inevitably would rush to build high-profit facilities, such as heart care centers, at the expense of other needs.

We also could see an abundance of shady MRI facilities with low-quality equipment providing inferior or unnecessary services. And nursing homes of questionable quality could sprout up everywhere.

If the Senate does take up this bill, we hope lawmakers will be able to strike a balance between radically changing the process and eliminating it altogether. The state needs to be able to foster competition while ensuring that all parts of the state have access to quality health care.

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# Ridgeland resident invents renewable energy option

**BY JESSICAH LAWRENCE**  
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After 15 years in the making, Kraig Blatchley's vision to provide a new renewable energy option may finally come to fruition.

The 45-year-old Ridgeland resident recently received his patent approval for the H2O UpFlow Generator, a machine that uses water and gravity to generate electricity. However, in order to build the first full-scale model at a pilot plant in the Cypress Ridge Industrial Park in Ridgeland, Blatchley seeks a \$4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy.

His concept came to him in a dream in 2000 and he immediately started drawing blueprints. He took his idea to Al Smith, a nuclear engineer and family friend in Massachusetts, who encouraged him to have it patented.

"As the future unfolds the need for renewable energy is greater than ever. At the rate we're going with the technology we're using, it's unsafe for the environment and humans. If something doesn't change, it's not going to be good," Blatchley said.

As a builder and specialty contractor Blatchley decided to create his first small-scale model of the generator after a Virginia-based company told him it would cost about \$100,000 to build his prototype which he needed before he could submit the grant application. Blatchley built

the small-scale generator at the price tag of \$1,000 in order to show investors how it works.

"I went to Home Depot and bought the parts. And by just using my garden hose, it worked great," he said.

However, on a larger scale the water would be gravity fed from a river.

"Upstream you'll have a pipe that lies in the water, and gravity feeds into the first unit, flowing through the stacked units. At the end unit, the

water would go right back into the river," Blatchley explained. "The water will come in and go right back out. We're not polluting it. The weight of the water is what generates the mechanical energy to create electricity."

In November 2014, Blatchley partnered with local engineer Daniel Brock who helped build a full-scale model behind his brother's mechanics shop, Blatchley Brake and Tire. In six months, a working H2O UpFlow Generator was completed and by October 2015 Blatchley received his patent.

The units he invented can be built in any size. The one Blatchley hopes to build in the Cypress Ridge Industrial Park could hold 1,000 to 5,000 gallons of water.

"The bigger they are, the more power you can generate," Blatchley said.

Now the inventor seeks to rally support from local and state officials.

Blatchley received an official letter from President Barack Obama's office in May 2013 acknowledging his concept

after he shared his renewable energy option idea.

Blatchley garnered a support letter from Ridgeland Mayor Joey Malphrus who said, "I am personally excited about the potential that your

green energy proposal has to have a positive impact on both our local community and even the larger, more wide-reaching community beyond Ridgeland."

The letter said the town offers its support in Blatchley's efforts to seek grant money for the development of the H2O UpFlow Generator and the creation of a new headquarters at the Cypress Ridge Industrial Park.

Blatchley said he plans to talk with Sen. Margie Bright Matthews in hopes to garner her support. He's also waiting to hear back from Gov. Nikki Haley's office in order to receive a stamp of approval for his renewable energy invention.

The Ridgeland resident's ultimate goal is to provide a renewable energy option and bring jobs to Jasper County through a manufacturing company that will produce the generators. But Blatchley says he has another plan if his grant application is denied. He will license the unit and sell the design to whoever is interested. However, Blatchley remains positive that his vision will transpire.

To watch firsthand how the H2O UpFlow Generator works, visit [www.blatchley-power.com](http://www.blatchley-power.com).

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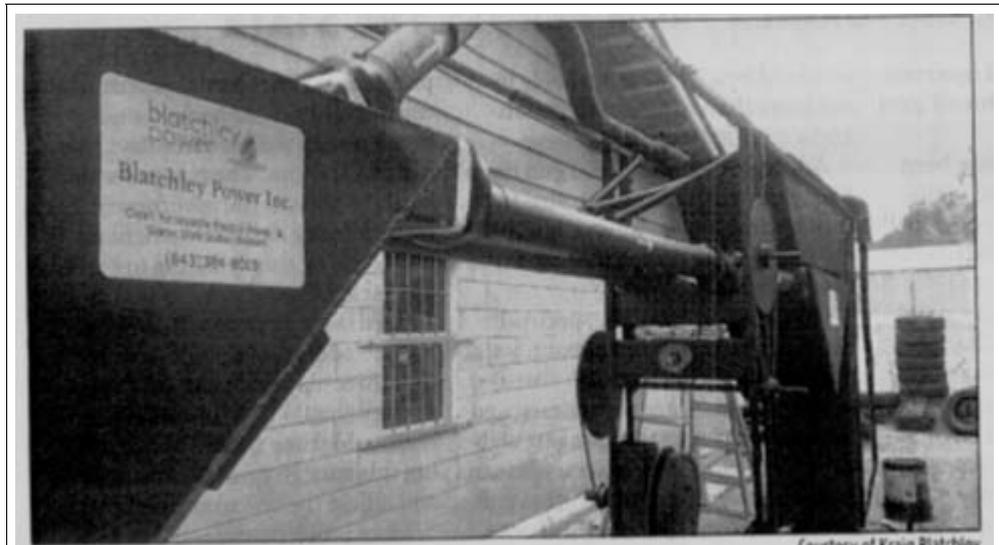


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Jessica Lawrence/Jasper County Sun Times

**Kraig Blatchley holds up his patent for the H2O UpFlow Generator.**



Courtesy of Kraig Blatchley

**The H2O UpFlow Generator uses water and gravity to create mechanical energy and produce electricity.**

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**Governor focusing on rural schools**

**ROBERT MONNIE**

**Staff Reporter**

In her 2016 Education Reform Initiative released last week, Gov. Nikki Haley is focusing on K-12 rural schools that may need additional funding to upgrade facilities, improve transportation, recruit and retain effective teachers and expand access to technology. Chesterfield County School District could be a recipient of some of these proposed funding increases.

Her 2016-17 Executive Budget proposes \$2.5 million for the Department of Education, in consultation with the Division of General Services at the Department of Administration, to contract with a facilities management specialist to create an accurate and comprehensive view of the condition of South Carolina's public schools.

Based on the results of the assessment of facilities, school districts would be able to apply for general obligation bonds from \$200 million set aside annually in the state's debt capacity to upgrade their buildings.

The second term governor also proposes an additional \$165,345,377 to increase base student cost to \$2,300, which compares to the current base student cost of \$2,220. For Chesterfield County School District, this measure would

increase its funding by about \$600,000.

With a proposed infusion of \$19.2 million, Haley wants to increase the minimum wage for bus drivers to \$10.96 per hour, which would be an increase of nearly \$3 per hour in CCSD. Another \$3.5 million would be set aside to mitigate hazardous bus routes, primarily in high traffic zones and dangerous crossings.

There also would be \$13.5 million in the pot to expand incentives to recruit and retain teachers in districts that have had a 12 percent or higher turnover during the past five years. These incentives include college tuition payments and student loan forgiveness for graduates who teach in rural or under-served districts for specified lengths of time. According to the state report cards, CCSD has had an average teacher turnover of 8.6 percent the past five years and thus would not qualify for these incentives.

In addition to providing information technology manpower from the state to assist undermanned district IT staffs, a plan is in the works to provide Wi-Fi hotspots to students as needed so the learning environment used in the classroom can be replicated in the home.

Haley is also advocating that the November 2018 election be the last time the state

superintendent of education be on the ballot. After that election, when she will no longer be in office due to term limits, the state superintendent would be appointed by the governor.

"I have said many times that my heart is always in rural areas, and growing up in Bamberg, I've always said we didn't know what we didn't have. Now I know what we didn't have. And once we know what you didn't have, and you know what children don't have, you can't ever turn away from that," said Haley. "We're seeing teachers having to wear rain boots to walk through the rain in schools. We're seeing walls that are molded. We're seeing building structures that are not safe. And so now we are saying 'it is time to deal with the facilities of the schools in our state.'"



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## Haley announces statewide domestic violence reforms

Governor Nikki Haley, members of the South Carolina Domestic Violence Task Force, and solicitors from around the state held a Statehouse press conference on January 7 announcing the implementation of the first set of significant, statewide reforms to address domestic violence in South Carolina.

Less than a year after the Task Force presented her with recommendations, Governor Haley announced that 10 of those recommendations have been addressed through a combination of Executive

Orders, the governor's Executive Budget, and agreements with state boards and non-government associations.

Actions taken by Governor Haley and the S.C. Task Force:

- Haley announced that her Executive Budget for 2016-2017 will fund new prosecutors, new judges, and new public defenders to end the practice of law enforcement officers

prosecuting domestic violence crimes in the courtroom, which will also reduce caseloads, decrease backlogs, and ensure that a dedicated prosecutor is

assigned to every county in South Carolina.

- Executive Order 2016-02 – extends the Task Force to ensure that all 50 Task Force recommendations will be completed and that meaningful results are rendered for the people of South Carolina.

- Executive Order 2016-03 – orders that all Cabinet agencies adopt a comprehensive HR policy for domestic violence that includes procedures for confidentiality, safety and security, performance and leave, and educating employees regarding available resources.

- Executive Order 2016-04 – orders certain Cabinet agencies that offer direct client services to adopt a risk assessment screening policy for domestic violence.

- The Task Force has

received commitments from nine professional boards to include domestic violence training in their continuing education: Doctors, Nurses, Dentists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Pharmacists, Social Workers, Cosmetologists, and Counselors and Therapists.

- The Task Force has

created a one-page regional brochure to be printed from LLR's website for those professional boards to distribute and make available in offices in all parts of the state.

- The Task Force has created a standardized reporting form for local governments to use when sending their annual report to the Treasurer's Office of how criminal fines and fees are spent on victim services.

Additional information about the S.C. Domestic Violence Task Force can be found on Governor Haley's website.