



Jasper County
Sun
Ridgeland, SC
Circ. 1950
From Page:
6
2/4/2015
65216



Completed. 1+148
Times and Democrat, Orangeburg, South Carolina, on FOIA reform study:

State officials make lofty promises

when it comes to ethics in government. They tout the transparency of legislative processes, accessibility of records and the openness of public meetings. But these efforts often fall short of providing any real transparency or legitimate hope of rooting out corruption.

That's the depressing bottom line that emerges from the State Integrity Investigation, a first-of-its-kind, data-driven assessment of transparency, accountability and anti-corruption mechanisms in all 50 states. Not a single state — not one — earned an A grade from the months-long probe

by The Center for Public Integrity founded in 1989 by Charles Lewis.

Only five states earned a B grade — New Jersey, Connecticut, Washington, California and Nebraska — from the project, which is a collaboration of the Center for Public Integrity, Global Integrity and Public Radio International.

Among the eight states with Fs is South Carolina, which earned a score of B on lobbying disclosure, B- on procurement, C+ on internal auditing, D- on political financing and F on ethics enforcement agencies, state budget processes, legislative accountability, state insurance commissions, state pension fund management, state civil service management, judicial accountability, executive accountability and public access to

SEE VOICES, PAGE 7



Jasper County
Sun
Ridgeland, SC
Circ. 1950
From Page:
7
2/4/2015
65216



Voices

FROM PAGE 6

information.

What's behind the dismal grades? According to the Center for Public Integrity, the answer is that across the board, state ethics, open records and disclosure laws lack a key feature: teeth.

Addressing that issue with regard to ethics laws is a state priority of South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley and key legislators in 2015. Plans in both the House and Senate to allow independent review of accusations against lawmakers are on the table again and appear to have a better chance than ever of advancing in light of the corruption case of former House Speaker Bobby Harrell.

But when it comes to across-the-board improvements, as important as any ethics reform legislation is a pending

bill that strengthens the state's Freedom of Information Act. The law has taken hits in recent years in the form of court rulings sealing autopsy reports and removing the requirement that a public body operate in public according to a preannounced agenda.

Nothing will ensure better government more than open government. Shining the light of public oversight on politicians and public officials is an amazing elixir for what ails government here or anywhere.

And if lawmakers are looking for reinforcement of the need the strengthen FOIA, we hope they will consider details in the Center for Public Integrity's rating of South Carolina in the category of access to public information:

Do citizens have a legal right of access to information? South Carolina scored 25 percent. To go along with a score of a 100

percent rating on citizens' legal right to government information and records is the practical nature of exercising the right. The state had scores of 0 on the right to appeal if a record is denied, absence of a government institutional mechanism through which citizens can request government records and the absence of an agency or entity that monitors the application of access to information laws and regulations.

Is the right of access to information effective? South Carolina scored 19 percent with grades of 0 on citizens' ability to resolve appeals in a reasonable period time and at a reasonable cost, and the absence of any agency to investigate denial of public information and impose penalties. The state's highest marks (50) came in the quality of responses to FOIA requests and offering reasons for denying an information request.

The News
Kingstree, SC
Circ. 4587
From Page:
19
2/4/2015
64159



PHOTO PROVIDED

¹⁴⁸ *Troubled S.C. State seeks another \$14M from state*

(AP) Financially troubled South Carolina State University is seeking an additional \$14 million, which includes \$6 million to pay off a state loan lawmakers approved last spring.

University President Thomas Elzey told a House budget-writing panel Wednesday the school currently owes \$17.5 million. Its debts include \$10 million in outstanding bills and the state loan the school is supposed to pay back this year but can't.

Elzey also wants permission to furlough all university employees seven days within the next six months, saving \$900,000. The furloughs, combined with program cuts, will create a balanced budget for the fiscal year that ends June 30, he said. He could not detail the cuts, and the budget would balance without factoring in the debt.

"You can't forget those. They're still there," said Rep. Garry Smith, R-Simpsonville.

"I'm very concerned with where we are now."

Elzey reminded the panel he sought a \$13 million grant last spring from the Budget and Control Board to pay long-overdue bills. Instead, the board chaired by Gov. Nikki Haley approved, at her recommendation, a loan to pay the oldest bills and keep the school afloat.

"I knew it was a problem," said Elzey, who took the school's helm in 2013. "It just creates a hole for tomorrow."

The state's only public historically black college is digging out of a hole created by years of declining enrollment, along with a drop in state funding and federal changes that made many students ineligible for grants. Despite the fall-off in revenue, the school continued to spend as if nothing changed, Elzey said.

Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter, D-Orangeburg, sought more information on the school's

plans to return to solvency.

"All the talk and fluff is great, but I'm interested in specifics about what the university's plans are to deal with the declining enrollment because that's where the money is," she said.

Legislators understand the important role and proud history of the college, founded in Orangeburg in 1896, but "we're going to have to exercise some tough love," Cobb-Hunter said.

The school's current debt includes \$1.5 million received as a first payment under a separate bailout approved last month.

Over Haley's objections, the financial oversight board agreed to dip into reserves to give SC State \$12 million over three years. Elzey said he hopes to soon receive the remaining \$4.5 million slated for this fiscal year. The three-year plan means some vendors will have to wait several years to get paid, he said.



News &
Reporter
Chester, SC
Circ. 6700
From Page:
1
2/4/2015
62090



148+234 Huge expansion coming to Haddon H

From staff reports

From staff reports

Apparently, "BB" stands for bigger business.

Haddon House Food Products, the largest privately-owned distributor, importer and exporter

of specialty, natural, organic, ethnic and kosher foods, is expanding its Chester County operations. The company is investing \$4.6 million to expand its operations in Richburg, S.C. The investment is expected to

create 55 new jobs.

Founded in 1960 and headquartered in Medford, N.J., Haddon House offers and main-

tains an inventory of more than 20,000 food products. In addition to the company's existing

Richburg, S.C. facility, Haddon House operates its other major distribution center in Howell, N.J. Collectively, the two facilities encompass more than 1,000,000-square-feet of warehouse space.

To expand its Chester County operations, Haddon House is constructing an addition to its existing facility. The addition will feature an expanded freezer

See JOBS, Page 6-A

its
M 29210
527
#10047



News &
Reporter
Chester, SC
Circ. 6700
From Page:
8
2/4/2015
62090



JOBS

Continued from Page 1-A

distribution building. Located at 578B L and C Distribution Park in Richburg, the nearly 30,000-square-foot expansion will allow the company to continue to meet the needs of new and existing customers throughout the southeastern United States and Caribbean as the frozen foods sector continues to grow at an unprecedented rate.

Construction is expected to be completed in the second quarter of 2015. Hiring for the expanded freezer distribution building will be ongoing. Those interested in applying for open positions may contact sbradley@haddonhouse.com. For more information on Haddon House Food Products, please visit www.haddonhouse.com.

The Coordinating Council for Economic Development approved job development credits related to the project.

"It is the continued support of Chester County, the great State of South Carolina and our deep respect for the fine people of Richburg which provides the ongoing desire to continue expanding our Richburg, South Carolina Distribution Center. We are grateful for the opportunity to service our customers from such a fine facility while developing additional employment opportunities for Chester County residents," said Haddon House Food Products Chief Executive Officer David Anderson, Sr.

Governor Nikki Haley said new industries are certainly exciting, but said expansions are just as important to the economy of Chester County and the state.

"It's always exciting

when new businesses choose to come to South Carolina, but it's a real reason to celebrate when we see one of our existing companies like Haddon House Food Products makes the decision to continue growing here. We congratulate Haddon House on announcing their second expansion in Chester County in only three years, and look forward to watching them succeed here for many years to come," Haley said.

Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt said South Carolina has always been known for great food, and said the thriving food processing and distribution industries are an extension of that. South Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers said "because of commitments like this, agribusiness has continued to be South Carolina's number one industry" and he pledged support Haddon House's investment in Chester.

For a while, this project went by the code name "Project: BB" when being discussed by Chester County Council. Chester County Supervisor Carlisle Roddey said the announcement shows that the county is doing a lot of things right and has the faith of Haddon House.

"We thank Haddon House for another vote of confidence by choosing to expand here in Chester County for a second time since 2012," Roddey said. "Chester County continues in its efforts to create a pro-business atmosphere that is attractive to our existing industrial partners."

Chester Development Association Chairman Brian Singleton called Haddon house "a great company" that is respected throughout the food industry.

Greer Citizen
Greer, SC
Circ. 9589
From Page:
9
2/4/2015
61135



148

State House takes up ethics

Ethics was the topic on the floor of the South Carolina House this past week. Two bills were passed.

The first bill revamps the makeup of the South Carolina Ethics Commission and turns the Commission into an independent investigative body. The independent commission is given the full resources of the South Carolina law enforcement community and is tasked with investigating ethics complaints made against elected officials. Under the House plan passed this past week, the State Ethics Commission is comprised of four members appointed by the governor, four elected by the Supreme Court, and two members elected by each the House and Senate. The measure passed the House unanimously.

REFORMING CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAWS

The second bill bans candidate affiliated "leadership" Political Action Committees (PAC). It even goes one step further and

states that elected offi-



YOUR VOICE IN COLUMBIA

REPRESENTATIVE
RITA ALLISON

cials can no longer accept campaign contributions from leadership PACs. This is an important step toward revamping the campaign finance laws in South Carolina. The measure passed the House.

ROAD FINANCING PLANS

Since Gov. Nikki Haley unveiled her preferred path for fixing roads in South Carolina, I have heard from many of you who favor or oppose any hike in the gas tax offset by a cut in the state income tax.

Because determining additional funding for roads is a complex issue with many interlocking parts (i.e., think 1,000 jigsaw puzzle pieces), the issue will require much analysis and lots of debate to find

the best path forward. I certainly appreciate the Governor putting forth

her proposals, but they are just a starting point for the consideration of all approaches, of which, there will be many.

As example, the House Transportation Infrastructure Ad-Hoc Committee finalized a plan to fix our state's roads and bridges. The bi-partisan committee has been working hard since last September to find solutions to fixing our state roads and bridges. The committee agreed on an initial proposal that would serve as a blueprint toward solving one of the most important issues facing our state. The bill is expected to be introduced next week with many co-sponsors. Our chief responsibility is to maximize current state revenues and direct available money to our roads. I have served on this committee and I know the group has looked at many areas, funding, reforming and working with our



Greer Citizen
Greer, SC
Circ. 9589
From Page:
9
2/4/2015
61135



counties. I think if we keep the dialogue flowing, we can truly move forward on a good plan to fix our roads and bridges.

Complex government issues aren't quickly solved. It is our responsibility to consider every alternative to find the best funding mechanisms for road improvements. Until all the information is considered and the financial impact on taxpayers is clear, we should remain open minded.

LEGISLATIVE SPOTLIGHT -- HELPING VETERANS

This week, the House Higher Education Subcommittee, unanimously approved H.3037 that would make South Carolina a truly veteran-friendly state. It allows veterans to move to our state and pay the in-state tuition rate at our colleges and universities, rather than paying the out-of-state rate (which can be twice

as high) or waiting out a year of residency to get the in-state rate.

The Education and Public Work's sub-committees have begun to meet and hear legislation related to education, mopeds, safety, higher education and etc. You can follow them by going to schouse.gov and clicking on the House link. You can also follow my voting record on the same link.

The first meeting of the Education Policy Review and Reform Task Force (that I have been asked to chair) will be Monday, Feb. 23 at 1 p.m. The meeting will be held in room 110 of the Blatt Building. Speaker Jay Lucas has charged this diverse committee to move forward with an educational review, reform and plan.

I am honored to serve you and your family. Your input, concerns and ideas are always welcome. Call or email me anytime.



Gaffney Ledger
Gaffney, SC
Circ. 8218
From Page:
4
2/4/2015
61126



148 Ruling stands, so fix schools

Plenty of obstacles stand in the way of improving schools in the state's poor, rural districts, but in November the S.C. Supreme Court said that the Legislature and the districts must work together to get over them.

On Monday, the court eliminated one big distraction in that process, as it rejected an appeal by state leaders to rehear the case.

Now it's time for legislative leaders to get down to the business of addressing the shameful situation.

Several reform efforts already are under way. Gov. Nikki Haley has included money in her budget to recruit teachers to rural districts that are failing. She also wants to expand a program that coaches children in reading, and to devote \$29.3 million for technology.

House Speaker Jay Lucas, R-Hartsville, has established a task force of lawmakers, business leaders and educators to evaluate reforms. Included are representatives of the districts named in the lawsuit.

Senate President Pro Tempore Hugh Leatherman, R-Florence, also formed a committee, to be chaired by Sens. Wes Hayes, R-Rock Hill, and Nikki Setzler, D-West Columbia.

Sadly, neither committee is expected to come up with a comprehensive solution any time soon. And that means the inadequate school transportation, unprepared teachers and substandard education in "educational ghettos" that the Supreme Court decision targets will have to wait.

Educators from the rural districts must also play a big part in the conversation, not just because doing so could help their students but because the Supreme Court so ordered it. The court was critical of school officials as well as the Legislature, saying they have spent money unwisely on administration rather than instruction, on athletic facilities rather than academic enhancements. It also chided small districts for simply blaming the state without exploring on their own such options as consolidation to reduce administrative costs.

The Supreme Court took a stunning 21 years to rule on the case. The plan prescribed by the court needs to be completed with reasonable dispatch.

Meanwhile limited reforms like those proposed by the governor should be implemented in the next school year. Indeed, all involved should be looking for measures that can start giving rural students better access to an adequate education even before the comprehensive plan is completed.

— The (Charleston)
Post and Courier

The Morning
News
Florence, SC
Circ. 35092
From Page:
7
2/5/2015
61050



SC DSS nominee advances in Senate; House grills agency

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Gov. Nikki Haley's pick to lead South Carolina's embattled Department of Social Services cleared another hurdle Wednesday in the Senate, while the agency faced continued questions in the House on whether its budget request will sufficiently improve efforts to protect abused and neglected children.

Susan Alford's nomination advanced to the full Senate for approval, seven months after Lillian Koller resigned amid increasing, bipartisan calls for her ouster.

Alford on Wednesday reiterated her commitment to cutting down on agency turnover, saying that could help solve other issues.

"Right now it's a revolving door," she said. "I've got to get that door to move slower."

Alford has said she wants to visit each county, assess its needs and hear why caseworkers leave the agency. Asked about a "culture of fear" at DSS, Alford said she'll work to create an environment where employees feel comfortable speaking up.

Last year, 40 percent of the agency's child welfare staff left, according to data the agency gave a House budget-writing panel later in the day. Agency officials pointed to the quarterly turnover rate, which showed that fewer people left after Koller resigned.

But 8 percent of staff leaving in a single quarter is still too high, Rep. Murrell Smith said of the fourth-quarter's rate. The chairman of the House panel that writes the agency's budget remains skeptical the agency's plan is sufficient. Alford needs to re-evaluate, he said.

"Your statistics still show problems. We need to resolve problems citizens are demanding we resolve" within DSS, Smith said. "It's not my job to shove money down the throat of an agency, but it is my job to ensure an agency is adequately funded."

He warned agency officials not to continue the practice of Koller, who he noted repeatedly said she needed no additional

money or manpower, even while overwhelming caseloads and chronic high turnover led to poor decisions on children's well-being.

The agency is seeking \$5.4 million next fiscal year to hire more than 200 additional child welfare workers, as well as \$1.8 million for raises. Hiring has been ongoing for months, but the high turnover makes a net increase more difficult.

Smith also warned that legislators won't tolerate further delays in implementing a centralized computer system for collecting, enforcing and distributing child-support payments, which is already 18 years overdue.

The agency is seeking \$7 million next fiscal year for continued efforts toward its creation.

Katie Morgan, director of child-support services, said the latest company hired to build the system for tracking deadbeat parents will complete its work in 2019. Work should begin April 1 under the state's new contract with Xerox, which calls for the system to be running statewide by March 2019. That's when federal fines of between \$10 million and \$13 million annually will stop.

"It's almost like Groundhog Day, saying this is the timeline," Smith said. "All of us are just tired of it. ... No one else can be blamed when there are delays."

The agency ended litigation last month with Hewlett-Packard on the company's 2007 contract. The settlement calls for the state to collect \$44 million from HP and pay \$5 million, for a net \$39 million that can be applied toward fines.

The state has been fined more than \$120 million since missing its extended 1997 deadline for complying with a 1988 federal law. HP and a previous contractor covered \$51 million of that.

Morgan insists this contract will result in a finished system.

Rather than starting from scratch, Xerox is basing South Carolina's child-support enforcement system on what the company did in Delaware. The agency will also work in tandem with the contractor, she said.

The Morning
News
Florence, SC
Circ. 35092
From Page:
5
2/5/2015
61050

148 REGION / STATE THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2015 • 5A
Schools superintendent: SC can bridge funding gap in phases

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — South Carolina Education Superintendent Molly Spearman says the state should bridge the \$600 million gap in K-12 education spending within the next five years.

Lawmakers have not fully funded the so-called "base student cost" since 2008, when the Great Recession forced deep cuts across state government.

According to state economic advisers, increasing it to the \$2,801 per student that state law calls for in 2015-16 would cost \$599 million.

Spearman's budget request for next year seeks an additional \$94 million to distribute through that main funding source for public schools, which would increase

that per-student spending by \$100 to \$2,220.



Spearman

That's \$20 more per student than Gov. Nikki Haley proposed in her budget proposal for the fiscal year starting July 1.

Spearman says it's impractical to try to close the gap in a single year. But she's encouraging a phased-in approach.

The newly elected Republican says that would go far toward addressing the state Supreme Court's ruling last fall that South Carolina's complicated, piecemeal education funding system denies opportunities to poor, rural students.

The justices ordered lawmak-

ers and district officials to collectively fix the system but gave no direction.

Rep. Kenny Bingham, R-Cayce, said Wednesday he agrees the "base student cost" needs to be raised. He generally supports Spearman's effort toward full funding, applauding it as a reasonable approach.

"But I don't want to give people false hope," Bingham chairman

of the House panel writing the K-12 budget, said.

Funding will depend on the state's revenues, he said, calling it unrealistic to expect yearly increases based on a 38-year-old law.

The "base student cost," which primarily funds salaries, is adjusted annually for inflation using formulas set by the 1977

Education Finance Act. Another main funding source for schools dates to 1984, when the Legislature added a penny to the state sales tax and devoted it to education programs.

Spearman, former director of the state Association of School Administrators, said increasing the base student cost is the best way to help districts, giving them more flexibility in how they spend that money.

"Superintendents and folks out in the field are telling me, 'Just help us with the base student cost. We don't need a lot of new programs. We don't need a lot of new funding for this or that, but if can just do as much as you can on base student cost, that's really what we need,'" she said.

Other parts of Spearman's

budget request match Haley's. That includes an additional \$10 million for reading coaches and \$3 million for summer reading camps, bringing total spending on those initiatives to \$40 million and \$9 million respectively. Those programs are part of legislation passed last year aimed at ensuring students can read adequately by third grade.

The reading abilities of students in last summer's reading camps grew, on average, four months' worth in just four weeks, according to test results collected by the Education Oversight Committee.

"If you do it well, the summer reading camps can really turn around some kids," EOC director Melanie Barton told Bingham's subcommittee.



The Morning
News
Florence, SC
Circ. 35092
From Page:
7
2/2/2015
61050



S.C. Editorial Roundup

**Post and Courier, Charleston, South Carolina,
on fixing schools:**

148

Plenty of obstacles stand in the way of improving schools in the state's poor, rural districts, but in November the S.C. Supreme Court said that the Legislature and the districts must work together to get over them.

On Monday, the court eliminated one big distraction in that process, as it rejected an appeal by state leaders to rehear the case.

Now it's time for legislative leaders to get down to the business of addressing the shameful situation.

Several reform efforts already are under way. Gov. Nikki Haley has included money in her budget to recruit teachers to rural districts that are failing. She also wants to expand a program that coaches children in reading, and to devote \$29.3 million for technology.

House Speaker Jay Lucas, R-Hartsville, has established a task force of lawmakers, business leaders and educators to evaluate reforms. Included are representatives of the districts named in the lawsuit.

Senate President Pro Tempore Hugh Leatherman, R-Florence, also formed a committee, to be chaired by Sens. Wes Hayes, R-Rock Hill, and Nikki Setzler, D-West Columbia.

Sadly, neither committee is expected to come up with a comprehensive solution any time soon. And that means the inadequate school transportation, unprepared teachers and substandard education in "educational ghettos" that the Supreme Court decision targets will have to wait.

Educators from the rural districts must also play a big part in the conversation, not just because doing so could help their students but because the Supreme Court so ordered it. The court was critical of school officials as well as the Legislature, saying they have spent money unwisely on administration rather than instruction, on athletic facilities rather than academic enhancements. It also chided small districts for simply blaming the state without exploring on their own such options as consolidation to reduce administrative costs.

The Supreme Court took a stunning 21 years to rule on the case. The plan prescribed by the court needs to be completed with reasonable dispatch.

Meanwhile limited reforms like those proposed by the governor should be implemented in the next school year. Indeed, all involved should be looking for measures that can start giving rural students better access to an adequate education even before the comprehensive plan is completed.

The Morning
 News
 Florence, SC
 Circ. 35092
 From Page:
 1
 2/2/2015
 61050



ner.

148 Gov. Haley asks agencies to step up collection

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Gov. Nikki Haley wants South Carolina's agencies to step up collections on the hundreds of millions of dollars owed by delinquent taxpayers.

About 50 agencies and colleges are potentially owed more than \$1 billion in unpaid fees, fines, taxes and tuition, according to a report released this month by Inspector General Patrick Maley. He cautions that the tally is flawed, due to agencies' different reporting methods, but "regardless of the true number, it's a big number," Maley told The Associated Press.

Haley has directed her Cabinet agencies to "maximize everything



Haley

you can" to collect, to include enrolling in the Department of Revenue's two debt-collection programs, which are available to agencies and local governments.

In the "setoff debt" program, Revenue siphons money from income tax refunds the debtor would otherwise get. The other program is more extensive, with recovery methods that include garnishing people's wages and seizing money from bank accounts. Fewer agencies use it, partly because they don't know the 19-year-old program is an option, Maley said.

"If you're not a member of both programs, enroll," Haley told directors of her 16 Cabinet agencies at a Jan. 23 meeting.

Revenue's 28.5 percent collection fee for the broader program, deducted from what it sends the owed agency, is another reason it's not used. That's higher than the 20-25 percent that private debt-collection businesses charge, Maley said. By comparison, Revenue charges a fixed, \$25 per refund for money collected through 'setoff debt.'

Maley recommends that Revenue better market both programs to

See **HALEY**, Page 3A



The Morning
News
Florence, SC
Circ. 35092
From Page:
3
2/2/2015
61050



Haley

From Page 1A

agencies and local governments and lower its fees for collecting through the more intensive GEAR (Government Enterprise Accounts Receivable). He also suggests that legislators pass a law allowing Revenue to collect those fees by taking more from the debtor, rather than subtracting it from what it sends the agency.

In 2013, Revenue recovered \$120 million through its setoff-debt program, taking \$7 million from what it sent the owed agencies, and recovered \$24 million through GEAR, collecting \$4 million in fees for that program, according to data from Revenue.

Revenue Director Rick

Reames said his agency is exploring the recommendations. Increasing collection efforts may require more employees, he said.

"We don't view it as a way for the department to make money," he said. "If we can cover our costs and provide the service, we're happy."

According to Maley's report, 16 of the 44 agencies and colleges listed as having outstanding debt don't use Revenue's programs. Those include five Cabinet agencies.

Republicans on the House's budget-writing committee had not yet seen Maley's report but said they generally support encouraging better collections.

"It's a huge amount. For every dime not collected, taxpayers have to pick up the shortfall because, peo-

ple aren't paying what they truly owe," said Rep. Bill Herbkersman, R-Bluffton, a Ways and Means subcommittee chairman.

He suggested offering residents a fee-forgiveness day to recover what's initially owed, before fees accrued that may have put paying the debt out of reach.

The agency reporting the most outstanding debt as of Dec. 31, 2013, was — perhaps ironically — the Department of Revenue, with \$594 million owed. That represents unpaid taxes due to the state over the past 10 years, rather than "true accounts receivable," said agency spokeswoman Ashley Thomas.

Public colleges were among 10 of the top 20 on Maley's list in amounts owed.