



Title: **South Carolina comes through 2015 with hope**  
 Author: BY JEFFREY COLLINS AND BRUCE SMITH Associated Press  
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# South Carolina comes through 2015 with hope

BY JEFFREY COLLINS  
AND BRUCE SMITH

*Associated Press*

COLUMBIA — The police shooting of an unarmed black man in North Charleston. The killing of nine people during Bible study at a historic African-American church in Charleston. Historic flooding that dropped nearly half their yearly rain fall in less than two days. The Confederate flag flown on the Statehouse grounds coming down after multiple other efforts had failed.

The past year has been one of significant change for South Carolina. Here are a series of snapshots about the key moments and players in 2015:

## Walter Scott

Before his death was shown around the world and he became a symbol of the ongoing debate over police shootings of unarmed African-Americans, Walter Scott was just a 50-year-old forklift driver at a warehouse and a father behind on his child support payments.

He was pulled over on April 4 for a broken brake light by North Charleston Officer Michael Slager. People go to jail all the time in South Carolina for missing child support payments and Scott, who was behind on his, called

his mother from his car to say he might need her help getting bail.

Moments later, he ran from his car and around the corner. Slager ran after him toward a vacant field. A passer-by captured what happened next on his cellphone. The video showed Slager firing eight shots at Scott's back. Scott was struck by several bullets and fell.

The shooting happened in a city whose officers faced years of accusations of mistreating minorities.

Scott's family called for calm, especially after Slager's swift arrest, saying they did not want Scott's memory soiled by violence.

A co-worker of Scott said at the time it was a fitting tribute. "He wouldn't hurt a fly, man," Ronald Smith said.

## Joe Riley

In his 40th and final year as Charleston's mayor, Joe Riley faced his most trying time.

The man who steered the city through Hurricane Hugo

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# HOPE

**CONTINUED** from 1A

in 1989 found his toughest moments on a hot, sticky summer night when what he called "pure, pure concentrated evil" came to a church in his 345-year-old city.

After a call at 9:30 p.m. June 17, Riley hurried to historic Emanuel AME Church where nine black parishioners had been shot and killed during a Bible study.

In the days following, Riley again became the face of the historic city, comforting victims, attending funerals and being a voice of calm.

"I knew that in this incident everything I did, everything I said, had to be perfect," to ensure calm

prevailed, Riley said.

The city – and indeed the whole nation – seemed to come together in the wake of the shootings, with thousands gathering on sweeping Ravened Bridge over the Cooper River in a show of unity several days later. President Obama and other dignitaries traveled to Charleston to pay their respects for those who died. More than \$5 million has been donated by thousands of people to help support the victims' families and fund college scholarships for Charleston-area students.

Riley has made it clear that he will continue to work on the issue of gun violence after he leaves office.

"We do not want to encroach

on law-abiding citizens' rights to own a gun but we must prevent guns from falling into the wrong hands," Riley said at an event earlier this month at Emanuel to announce a new effort to curb gun violence.

The suspected killer in the Charleston shootings, Dylan Roof, was able to buy the gun that was used in the shootings because of a record keeping problem that prevented federal officials from disqualifying him before a three-day deadline expired.

## Russell Ott

Russell Ott knew that the Confederate flag flying outside the

South Carolina statehouse had to come down, and it had to come down now - not later.

The eyes of the nation and the world were squarely focused on his place of work and the little known 37-year-old House member who took over his dad's seat back in 2013 was having trouble believing what was happening. He hadn't made a passionate speech imploring his colleagues to let go of the symbol of a by-gone era, but he firmly believed it was time for it to happen and he didn't want to see the legislature and the state blow their chance of having it happen and risk looking like fools or obstructionists.

Gov. Nikki Haley had said less

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than a week after the slayings at Emanuel AME Church that the flag should come down and the state Senate had reached the same conclusion.

But as the sun set on July 8, the people who wanted the flag removed were stunned. Flag supporters in the house suddenly appeared to have enough votes for an amendment to the bill backed by Haley and the Senate that would postpone its passage, keeping the rebel banner flying outside the chambers. The flag supporters wanted a guarantee that the flag would be sent to a museum and they were willing to hold up the process for it, even if it meant going against the rising tide of support to bring it down.

Ott has been around the Legislature but never before had been a key figure. He lobbied for farmers for nearly a decade before replacing his dad and in three years had been the sponsor of one bill that has become law – creating a migratory waterfowl committee.

But he knew parliamentary rules and he knew there was an arcane, rarely used way that he could get the flag supporters what they wanted and also keep the state on pace to bring the banner down.

His goal was simple. The longer the debate went on, the more likely it was that the whole process would get derailed.

He and his colleagues went to work, twisting arms, holding last minute votes and watching the clock tick past midnight to allow them to vote on the final measure during a new day.

At 1 a.m. the bill finally passed. On Friday July 10 the flag finally came down. In South Carolina, however, the debate over the fate of the flag still rages on.

### Maj. Gen. Robert Livingston

It was the most important mission of South Carolina National Guard commander Maj. Gen.

Robert Livingston's life, directing thousands of soldiers and civilians during South Carolina's historic floods.

Livingston was a true soldier working with Gov. Nikki Haley to carry out her wishes and by her side when she gave the public updates.

But people around the state left little doubt that Livingston's preparation in the days and years before the floods, and his decisive action as the disaster unfolded, prevented a terrible situation from being so much worse.

"We were rescuing people at the same time we were putting

things together back in Columbia," Livingston said.

Livingston helped get clean water into the pipes at Columbia hospitals worried about how many critically ill patients might die if they had to close and move them. His soldiers saved dozens of lives with air and boat rescues and helped repair washed out roads and bridges. They averted

what would have been a disaster on top of a disaster by keeping Columbia's water system running and water coming from almost 400,000 taps by fixing a canal breach and laying pipe to get water into the treatment plant.

"A lot of the guys who were doing a lot of discussion had built roads and dams and things like that down in Ecuador and Honduras and places like that back in the 1980s and 90s," Livingston said. "They understood building structures in less than ideal conditions."

Now Livingston laughs that he has another set of problems, created by well-meaning South Carolinians who poured kindness at his soldiers for weeks.

"The support from the people of South Carolina was just tremendous," Livingston said "I'm having to put half of my soldiers on the weight control program now because they got fed so many doughnuts, cookies and everything else."



AP PHOTO/DAVID GOLDMAN

People join hands against the backdrop of an American flag as thousands of marchers meet in the middle of Charleston's main bridge in a show of unity after nine black church parishioners were gunned down during a Bible study in Charleston.



JANET BLACKMON MORGAN/THE SUN NEWS VIA AP, FILE

This aerial shot shows flooding around homes in the Carolina Forest community in Horry County, between Conway and Myrtle Beach. It could take weeks to recover from being pummeled by a historic rainstorm that caused widespread flooding and multiple deaths.

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# County officials give voice to abused animals

BY CHRISTINA CLEVELAND

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It was only in August when the last of three dogs, victims of animal cruelty in McCormick County, found its forever home by way of the SPCA Albrecht Center for Animal Welfare in Aiken.

The dogs were found with their muzzles taped shut and later rescued from the Humane Society of McCormick County and its local sheriff's department before being sent to Aiken.

According to Aiken Public Safety

Officer Alan Willing, who handles animal control for the City of Aiken,

the case involved an elderly man whose barking dogs led to neighbor complaints and him ultimately taping them up. Media outlets later reported the former owner was charged with animal cruelty.

"He thought he was doing right based on the complaint of his neighbors, the dogs hushed and everyone's happy – but no, they're not," Willing said. "The dogs aren't happy. That's where you've crossed that line now."

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## ABUSE

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Though Willing said the case is not a common occurrence in Aiken, equally upsetting incidents of animal cruelty or neglect are often a regular, unfortunate part of his job. He and county enforcement officer and Animal Control supervisor Bobby Arthurs said they respond to the cases, many of which are complaint-driven, year round.

### The numbers

For Public Safety, Willing said he hasn't noticed "a great deal of increase" in cases this year and Public Safety said there has been four ill treatment to animals cases as of Dec. 14. In the county, Arthurs said there are 18 pending for the year, but the numbers don't reflect all of the calls responded to.

"We respond to a lot," Arthurs said. "It's daily and weekly but many are not charged. Most of the time it's intervention and most improve."

The enforcement officers

County: Aiken

said most of what leads to the neglect or abuse comes down to education, which is when the officers have to step in – not just to pursue charges but to help animal owners.

"Some people, if it is a lack of education or a lack of knowledge or know-how, it doesn't do them any good to charge them with a felony," Willing said. "If we can educate and it turns around and the best comes out for the people and the animal, that's what we're after."

Turning it around for animal owners means knowing the law and what they must provide for animals in their care, which includes adequate food, water and shelter to prevent animals from the elements of the weather. A rabies vaccination is also required.

### The faces of abuse

The types of cases can run the gamut in Aiken, but Arthurs said there is one common issue that Animal Control is working to reel in. Much of what he has recently seen involves leaving dogs on a chain – a choice many people make

because they cannot afford a pen or any closure or confinement, he said.

But the cheaper alternative can lead to other problems down the road such as an animal being able to tip his water container with the chain, limiting its access to water.

"Also, the chain twists when the dog is so active they go in circles and causes the chain to entangle within itself," Arthurs said. "The chain gets shorter and then it gets where the dog can't reach its water or its doghouse or shelter because of being on a chain."

He said many cases in the county have also involved neglected or severely emaciated dogs, or cats that are victims of hoarding cases.

"... Doing this kind of job is an emotional roller coaster, I'll tell you that much," Arthurs said after sharing a story of several cats who died during a past hoarding case.

This year, he said the County has responded to mostly vaccination and starvation cases. But for animals that arrive at the County or City's shelters, there is often times a ray of hope.

At the county shelter, animals are generally surrendered during cruelty cases, Arthurs

said. Animals that are brought in during cruelty cases are held for the duration of the case where they are seen by a veterinarian and treated. Animals are also adopted at the shelter, which gets help from volunteers with Friends of the Animal Shelter, also known as FOTAS.

"We're not a no-kill facility. We're not. But we adopt just as much as any other shelter around here does, probably more," Arthurs said, adding that it often transfers animals to no-kill shelters.

The Albrecht Center is an adoption center, a full-service veterinarian clinic and an education and training center. The City of Aiken contracts with SPCA to accept the animals that Animal Control deals with and most are picked to go through the adoption program, according to President and CEO Barbara Nelson. Other animals at the SPCA come from all over the state.

Nelson said for criminal cases, animals are held at the



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SPCA but are not advertised. For strays, there are state laws about how long they stay in Animal Control's possession but "once the animal comes into (the SPCA's) possession, they are brought into our adoption system and our medical system, and once they come into our system they are no kill and 90 percent of the dogs are re-homed by us."

### What people should know

Last June, South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley signed a bill into effect increasing fines for ill treatment of animals. The higher fines took the cases out of magistrate court, according to Arthurs.

"When they were in magistrate court, we could actually issue a ticket ... Now, that is not the case. If you're charged

with ill treatment of animal, we actually take an arrest warrant out on them," he said. "We turn it over to the Sheriff's Office or they meet us at the jail and then they're arrested."

The cases are prosecuted by the solicitor's office and go through general sessions. Arthurs said the process is a bit longer, but the good side

is that officers can act as witnesses.

"The biggest thing that I want to get out is to educate folks and let them know: You don't get a ticket for cruelty to animals," he said. "You're not going to be getting a ticket. You're going to be arrested and you're going to jail. That's the way you're going to be charged. We have laws to protect these animals because we're the voice. Without the laws, the animals have no voice."

If someone sees an animal being mistreated, he advises the best thing to do is use common sense and call Animal Control officers. The number for Public Safety is 803-642-7620, the county shelter's contact is 803-642-1537 and the SPCA can be reached at 803-648-6863. However, as long as proper sustenance and shelter is met, it is not cruelty.

Arthurs and Willing also added intervening in some ways, like feeding a dog believed to be hungry, can sometimes hurt Animal Control in proving a case.

"The reality is, the only way we're going to get somebody for cruelty to animal is to let the offense happen," Arthurs said.

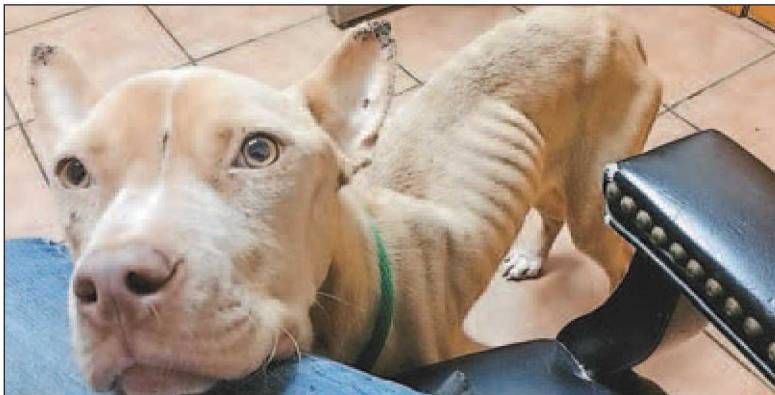
But the best way for a pet and its owner to stay happy is picking an animal that fits their lifestyle and giving it

some TLC, according to Willing.

"Pay attention to the pet," Nelson added. "Don't just put it in the backyard and ignore it. That's what we see so often. The biggest mistake is that everyone wants a puppy or they want a dog for whatever reasons – it's a status symbol; it's a companion; temporarily they need something to love them – and then they neglect it. It's like taking love and throwing it out the window."

The SPCA Albrecht Center for Animal Welfare is located at 199 Willow Run Road in Aiken. The Aiken County Animal Shelter is located at 411 Wire Road in Aiken.

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SUBMITTED PHOTO BY ANN KINNEY

**This pit bull, Bran, was found abused in August and taken in by the SPCA.**

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 Author: BY CASSIE COPE [ccope@thestate.com](mailto:ccope@thestate.com)  
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## STATE LEGISLATION

# S.C. Democrat fights abortion ban with proposal to limit Viagra

BY CASSIE COPE

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A Democratic lawmaker from Richland County acknowledges her proposal to make it more difficult to get medication to treat erectile dysfunction likely



McLeod

will to go nowhere. But state Rep. Mia McLeod says she wants to send a message to the GOP-con-

trolled General Assembly about legislating about the bodies of South Carolinians.

McLeod said her bill — one of most controversial introduced before the session starts in 10 days — is her way of fighting proposals that would restrict abortions in the state.

"It's not a joke," she said.

A top House Republican sees little humor in McLeod's bill.

House Majority Leader Bruce Bannister, R-Greenville, compared her proposal to a political cartoon — "Entertaining, but kind of sad that someone would spend the time to draft and introduce that bill."

McLeod's proposal won't stop GOP-led efforts to limit abortions,

including a ban 20 weeks into a pregnancy that is close to final passage.

"The caucus is going to support some pro-life legislation as we have done in the past," Bannister said.

McLeod knows her bill to limit erectile dysfunction medication — including Viagra and Cialis, part of a \$4 billion-a-year worldwide industry — is a long shot.

"In a male-dominated Legislature is it likely to pass?" McLeod asked. "No."

But she added her bill, along with anti-abortion proposals, waste lawmakers' time, energy and taxpayer money.

McLeod has mentioned her conversation-creating bill in fundraising pitches for her 2016 state Senate campaign. She proposes that doctors must clear several hurdles before prescribing erectile dysfunction medication, including:

- Referring a patient to a sex therapist
- Conducting a cardiac stress test
- Notifying the patient of the drug risks
- Obtaining a notarized affidavit from at least one of the patient's sexual partners that states the

patient has experienced symptoms of erectile dysfunction during the previous 90 days

McLeod said her experience on a special House panel that investigated the state's two Planned Parenthood clinics this fall fueled her to file her erectile dysfunction bill.

The panel found the S.C. clinics were not involved in donor tissue programs, a source of national political controversy this year, McLeod said.

The committee has not finished working, said state Rep. Gary Clary, a Pickens Republican who chairs the panel. But the investigation found, so far,

that no state money is being spent to fund Planned Parenthood.

Another panel of three senators and three state representatives will begin working out the differences on a proposal to prohibit abortions at 20 weeks — instead of the current 24 weeks — soon after legislators return Jan. 12.

Lawmakers on the committee are working out possible exemptions for rape and incest and the definition of fetal anomaly, said state Sen. Brad Hutto, an Orangeburg

Democrat who sits on the panel.

Once a deal is reached, lawmakers will vote again on the bill. If approved, the ban would head to Republican Gov. Nikki Haley's desk for her signature to become law.

Even if a 20-week ban passes, McLeod expects attempts to restrict abortion to continue.

"I don't see an end in sight," she said. "That's troubling to say the least."

McLeod's proposal highlights how some lawmakers advocate for keeping the government out of people's lives — except when it comes to restrictions for women, Hutto said.

Women's health decisions should be left up to the woman, her doctor and her faith, Hutto said.

By proposing to restrict access to erectile dysfunction medication, McLeod said she wants legislators to think about abortion differently and broaden discussions to include men's sexual health.

If some lawmakers are going to insist upon regulating some issues over reproductive rights, then McLeod said, "We should govern it all."

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## Pre-filed bills

### A GLANCE AT SOME PROPOSALS THAT S.C. LAWMAKERS WILL CONSIDER DURING THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION THAT BEGINS JAN. 12:

#### A DAM FUND

S.C. Rep. Jimmy Bales, D-Richland, is proposing to spend \$25 million to establish a fund that would provide loans to dam owners.

The money, issued through the state Department of Health and Environmental Control, would be used to repair or replace dams that have public access roads on them or are on a body of water that allows public access.

Many homeowners associations don't have the money to repair dams that failed in October's flooding, Bales said. If a dam is owned by a homeowners association, its board of directors would apply for the loan and pledge its dues as collateral.

All loans would have to be paid back over 15 years or less at an interest rate set by the state treasurer.

Bales added repairing the dams and restoring the lakes would help keep local tax bases up.

#### LAKE NOISE PROHIBITION

State Sen. Ronnie Cromer, R-Newberry, who lives on Lake

Murray, wants to address complaints of noise from boats and businesses on the lake.

Since Newberry, Saluda and Richland counties all touch the lake, noise restrictions vary in each county.

In addition, a sheriff in one county doesn't have jurisdiction across the border, Cromer said.

Cromer is suggesting DHEC regulate noise violations.

#### MORE MONEY FOR AIRPORTS

State Sen. Paul Campbell, R-Berkeley, introduced a proposal that could send some property tax paid on airlines' aircraft to aid smaller airports across the state.

Campbell, executive director of the Charleston County Aviation Authority, suggests the State Aviation Fund receive aircraft property tax money after the first \$2.5 million is collected.

The aviation fund is not receiving any of the property tax money because the state does not collect enough taxes to meet the current \$5 million annual threshold. The State Aviation Fund revenue is used for airfield maintenance, weather reporting and matching of federal construction grants.

Smaller general aviation airports in South Carolina are prioritized for the money because they don't have the revenue streams of the state's four largest airports in Charleston, Columbia, Myrtle Beach and Greenville/Spartanburg, said James Stephens, executive director of S.C. Aeronautics Commission.

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## LOOKING AHEAD

# 10 QUESTIONS FOR 2016

What issues, local and statewide, will we be talking about this year?

*Herald staff*

Voters, elected officials and business leaders across York, Chester and Lancaster counties – and throughout South Carolina – will have plenty of issues to debate and, we hope, act on over the next 12 months. Here are 10 questions you should be reading a lot about in 2016:

### **WILL S.C. FIX ITS ROADS?**

The state's crumbling highway system will be a focus of the new legislative session that gets underway in January.

Last year, the S.C. House approved a bill sponsored by state Rep. Gary Simrill, R-Rock Hill, that would have reduced the number of roads in the system maintained by the state Department of Transportation, while raising the state's gas tax to pay for the state's infrastructure needs.

That proposal passed the House by an 87-20 margin, but never came up for a vote in the Senate, and faces a veto threat from Gov. Nikki Haley if it doesn't also include offsetting tax cuts.

The road problem was compounded by damage from October's heavy flooding in much of

the state, but many lawmakers might be less likely to support the plan with a surplus projected in DOT's budget and the threat of an election challenge in 2016.

The roads bill will die if not approved by the end of the Legislature's two-year session in June.

### **PICKING A PRESIDENT?**

South Carolina voters will weigh in early on the race to choose the next president of the United States.

Republicans will go to the polls Feb. 20 to choose from a dozen candidates competing for the party's nomination, while the state's Democrats will choose from a smaller number of contenders one week later, on Feb. 27.

Democratic frontrunner Hillary Clinton will count on support from South Carolina's black voters to shore up her advantage over challenger Bernie Sanders.

The GOP, meanwhile, will have to sort through a crowded field to restore the state's reputation as a Republican bell-

wether. In 2012, S.C. voters opted for Newt Gingrich, who went on to lose the nomination to Mitt Romney – the only time the state has failed to pick the eventual nominee.

### **ANOTHER YEAR OF CHAMPIONS?**

Will Winthrop get back to the

NCAA men's basketball tournament for the first time since 2010? The Eagles are off to their best start since the storied 2006-07 season, when they knocked off Notre Dame in the NCAA tournament and won 29 games. Can Pat Kelsey's team build on its strong start and rekindle March Madness memories in the Rock Hill area?

South Pointe became the first Rock Hill school to win back-to-back state football titles in mid-December. The Stallions (going for a third straight) and Northwestern (hunting consecutive titles) both will have championships to defend in 2016 in new-look regions and classifications. The S.C. High School League is adding a fifth classification this season for the first time.

Can the Carolina Panthers win the first professional sports championship in the area's history? The Panthers have a far thinner tradition of football success, but after winning the first 14 games of their 2015-16 season fans are dreaming of what might be on the NFL horizon in the coming months. The division rival Atlanta Falcons handed the Panthers their first loss of the season last week, but fans across South Carolina and North Carolina are hoping for a rebound – and a successful play-off run to legitimize what's been a storybook season otherwise up to this point.

**SEE QUESTIONS, 5A**



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FROM PAGE 1A

# QUESTIONS YOU'LL BE READING ABOUT IN 2016

## WILL YORK COUNTY BUILD A NEW HQ?

Last year ended with the future of York County's new administration building up in the air.

Facing a public scolding by conservative activists who oppose any additional county bonding, the York County Council in December removed a \$24 million plan to build a new office building from a package of bond projects that voters approved in November.

Instead, council members voted 4-3 on Dec. 21 to send the issue to a "study group" that will recommend a course of action by April 18 – even though the County Council voted in March to build a new administration building near the site of its current headquarters on York's South Congress Street after a review of the site by York County's construction management firm.

Proponents of the building argued delaying construction would only increase the eventual cost of the project to taxpayers.

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR PENNIES?

York County likely will learn this year what roads will get a facelift from the fourth round of "Pennies for Progress," which could go to county voters for approval in 2017. The program is funded by a local penny sales tax.

A six-person commission – half appointed by the York County Council and half representing the county's municipalities – is tasked with formulating the list of roads most in need of repair, and the board will hold a series of community meetings next year to get the public's input on where drives are the worst.

The last round of Pennies, approved in 2011, is on track to raise \$161 million by the time it expires in April 2018. It could be a while before drivers see the results of some of those projects; of the 62 projects approved for Pennies 3, 47 remain in the design and permit-

ting phase, and funding for some existing projects might roll over to the 2017 list.

## WHAT WILL 'EQUITY' LOOK LIKE FOR ROCK HILL SCHOOLS?

High school attendance zones will likely be on the 2016 agenda for the Rock Hill school board.

Northwestern and Rock Hill high schools are near capacity for students, while South Pointe High School has 23 vacant classrooms this year.

But residential growth in Rock Hill likely will continue to be in the Northwestern and Rock Hill high school attendance zones.

School board members discussed the idea of adjusting attendance lines last year, but could not reach a conclusion. One recommendation has been to keep elementary school zones intact.

Historically, changing attendance zones is a controversial process.

A committee studying equity among the three

high schools also considered the questions in

2015. The equity committee looked at a variety of economic, academic and demographic factors in trying to define equity among those schools. The committee is expected to make its recommendations to the board this month.

## WILL FORT MILL FINALLY GET A HOSPITAL?

The more than 11-year battle to build a new Fort Mill hospital could again play out in the courts in 2016 – this time in the S.C. Court of Appeals.

Appeals court clerk Jenny Kitchings said Thursday that once the final brief for the case is filed, the court will consider whether to hear oral arguments or decide the case on its record. Based on the case's record – there are now 17 volumes of previous testimony and data – it is likely the Court of Appeals will hear oral arguments, Kitchings said.

The case before the Appeals Court was filed in January 2015 when Carolinas HealthCare System appealed a state Administrative Law Court decision granting Piedmont Medical Center permission to build

a Fort Mill hospital.

For the rest of the year, lawyers for the two hospitals filed documents with the S.C. Court of Appeals, including a Carolinas HealthCare System request to issue a stay while the issue is under appeal. The Court of Appeals declined to issue the stay.

Piedmont Medical Center plans to build a 100-bed hospital at the intersection of S.C. 160 and U.S. 21 Bypass, while Carolinas HealthCare wants to build a \$77.5 million, 64-bed hospital at the Sutton Road exit on Interstate 77.

As proposed, a Fort Mill hospital would have all the services of a community hospital – general surgery, emergency department, labor and delivery and advanced imaging.

## MORE IMPACT FEES?

After nearly a year's worth of debate, the Fort Mill Town Council imposed impact fees last year as a way to keep up with the cost of continued growth. The town's population more than doubled in the past decade.

The fees collected on certain new developments will pay for improvements in town services, including fire service and recreation – but not for roads, which many residents favored. After two full months of collecting the new fees, the town had an extra



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\$76,800 for recreation, \$23,600 for municipal services and about \$9,400 for fire service.

This year, the Town Council will decide how to spend the money and if any tweaks to the fee ordinance are needed. They can be adjusted in a number of ways at any time, as long as the Town Council approves.

Lancaster County could follow Fort Mill's lead in 2016. Last summer, the County Council heard a presentation about impact fees from the Catawba Regional Council of Governments. The County Council is expected to schedule a hearing on a proposed impact fee ordinance sometime this month.

Although they could be implemented countywide, County Council members are specifically looking for ways to offset the cost of providing more

services in the high-growth Indian Land area.

### WHAT'S NEXT FOR KNOWLEDGE PARK?

The sounds of machinery should return to the Bleachery in 2016.

Renovations on the five-story Lowenstein building are expected to start in the first quarter of the year and take less than a year to complete, says Tim Elliott, a partner in Sidewalks Rock Hill LLC, which is partnering with the master developer, Sora-Phelps.

It will be the first construction on the project since the concept was unveiled in 2012.

There's also much paperwork still to be done to transform the former Rock Hill Printing & Finishing Co. site into a place where people can live, work and play. Developers are working with city officials to finalize the development

standards for building height and density and uses, Elliott said.

The developers are also working with state officials to determine what must be done so the redevelopment qualifies for a variety of tax credits, especially historic tax credits.

The city already has improved White Street by upgrading utilities, adding concrete curbs and gutters, and repaving the street. Officials are working with the developers to determine what other infrastructure improvements need to be made. Plans call for a network of interior roads.

Also remaining from 2015 is the issue of transportation. Will the site be served by a streetcar linking it to Winthrop University and downtown Rock Hill? Advocates say it would result in a higher quality of development with more retail and restaurant space.



NATI HARNIK AP

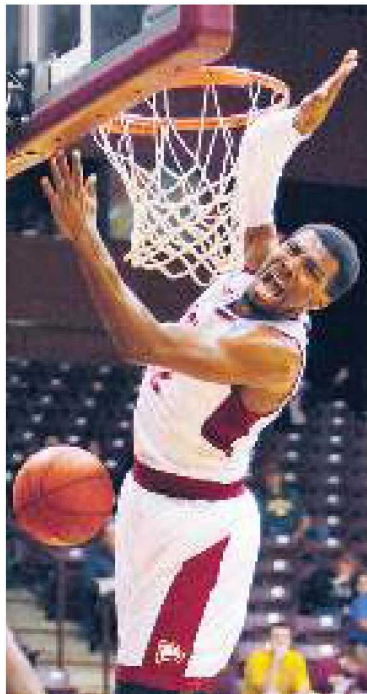
Donald Trump leads the GOP polls in South Carolina now. Will he when it comes time to vote in February?



ANDY BURRISS aburris@heraldonline.com

After years of planning, we should finally see some work start at the Lowenstein Building at the Bleachery in Rock Hill.

Title: **10 QUESTIONS FOR 2016**  
 Author: Herald staff  
 Size: 225.37 square inch  
 Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688



ANDY BURRISS [aburris@heraldonline.com](mailto:aburris@heraldonline.com)

Will Winthrop's men's basketball team make it back to the NCAA tournament?



Town of Fort Mill

Fort Mill will spend some of its new impact fees on fire service.



Herald file

Will Piedmont Medical Center finally get to build its new hospital in Fort Mill?



Title: **10 QUESTIONS FOR 2016**  
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JEFF SOCHKO Herald file

The state's crumbling highway system will get a lot of attention when the Legislature reconvenes in January.



Herald file

Will York County finally move forward on a new administration building?



Herald file

Will South Pointe High School benefit from any of the school district's equity efforts?

Title: **10 QUESTIONS FOR 2016**

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Herald file

What new road projects will be identified for the next round of “Pennies for Progress?”



Title: **Database could curb drug abuse**  
 Author: BY SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press  
 Size: 47.27 square inch  
 Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688



## HEALTH CARE

# Database could curb drug abuse

BY SEANNA ADCOX  
 Associated Press

## COLUMBIA

Most doctors in South Carolina will soon be required to consult a state-wide database of patients' medical history as a way to combat the state's rampant prescription painkiller problem.

The changes will direct any doctor who wants to bill either Medicaid or the state health plan to use the database that's been voluntary since 2008, said Christian Soura, director of the state's Department of Health and Human Services.

Announcements will likely go out in February on the mandate, which starts April 1, he told The Associated Press.

The South Carolina Medical Association supports the change, but "there will be some doctors unhappy about yet another step thrown into the mix," said its CEO, state Rep. Todd Atwater.

"Some say it will slow me down another minute and half I don't have, but really?" said Atwater, R-Lexington. "Sometimes you have to have a little inconvenience to do the right thing and get some of these opioids off the streets."

The mandate will come three years after Inspector General Patrick Maley recommended it in a report, describing high-prescribers as either motivated by money or naively helping "doctor shoppers." In response to his report, Gov. Nikki Haley created the Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Council, which similarly concluded one year ago that mandating the database's use is key to combating abuse of OxyContin, Percocet and other opioids.

Similar mandates enacted in New York and Ten-

nessee in 2012 resulted in drops of 75 percent and 36 percent, respectively, a year later in patients seeing multiple doctors for the same drugs, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2014 Vital Signs report.

That report ranked South Carolina 11th highest nationwide in prescribing painkillers, with 102 prescriptions written for every 100 people.

Technology improvements to the database were also critical to gaining their support and – according to officials – the reason for delaying the mandate.

A law passed in June 2014 required pharmacists to report daily on the controlled substances they sell, to ensure the database is regularly updated. But a clause specified that doctors and pharmacists don't have to actually consult it before prescrib-

ing or dispensing medicine.

According to the council's report six months later, just 21 percent of South Carolina's prescribers had registered for the Prescription Monitoring Program and few of them actually used it.

Officials say that's partly because registering required filling out paperwork, getting it notarized and mailing the application to DHEC. And only the prescribing doctor had a login to access the database.

The decree will affect the vast majority of doctors in South Carolina, though the exact percentage is unclear.

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## **S.C.'s painkiller abuse problem**

Beginning this spring, most doctors will be required to register and use a state database of patients' prescription history. Here's a look at South Carolina's painkiller abuse problem and current use of the Prescription Monitoring Program:

- Last fiscal year, 291.4 million opiates were dispensed statewide to 1.2 million patients. Compared to the previous year, that's 18.6 million more opiates to 670 fewer patients.
- In 2014, at least 487 South Carolinians died by accidentally overdosing on a prescription drug. That's up from 236 in 2013 and 225 in 2012.
- The database helped lead to 400 arrests last fiscal year. Charges included controlled substance fraud, doctor shopping and prescription forging. Health care professionals made up a quarter of those arrested. The agency doesn't track case outcomes.

Source: South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control

Title: **Rivals rooting for Tigers, Sooners**  
 Author: BY ADAM KILGORE The Washington Post  
 Size: 58.12 square inch  
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## ORANGE BOWL

# Rivals rooting for Tigers, Sooners

BY ADAM KILGORE

*The Washington Post*

FORT LAUDERDALE, FLA.

In the middle of this month, Clemson safety Jayron Kearse received messages from players he would typically consider rivals. He required no reinforcement of the importance of Clemson's college football playoff showdown against Oklahoma, the winner of which will play for the national title. Members Florida State Seminoles wanted him to remember another strain of motivation.

"They're telling me, 'Put on for the ACC,' things like that," Kearse said. "They did it one year. They went to the playoffs last year. Right now, we feel like we have the ACC on our back. We're going to try to carry it to the best of our abilities."

When the Orange Bowl kicks off Thursday at 4 p.m., the foremost concern of No. 1 Clemson and No. 4 Oklahoma will be on their own upshot - their season ends, or they play for the big trophy. The playoff game will also offer a one-game referendum - no matter how frivolous the idea - of the strength of the Big 12 and the ACC, perhaps the two most-maligned conferences among the Power 5.

The rest of college football remains suspicious of the ACC, Florida State's national title two years

ago notwithstanding, especially after Oregon drubbed the Seminoles in last season's playoff. The Big 12, the lone Power 5 conference without a title game to showcase its best teams, did not send a team to the playoff last season and boasts the fourth seed, and therefore the last team to make the cut, this year. If Alabama beats Michigan State, it will leave either the ACC or the Big 12 as the lone conference to win a playoff game.

Is it rational to gauge a conference's relative strength on the basis of one game, like some gridiron version of single combat? Surely, it is not. But if you are looking for rational, college football is the wrong place to start. The hot take machine is already humming, and the missives are already being prepared, ready to be typed on message boards and spoken by rival coaches in living rooms. If Oklahoma loses, it will be more evidence of the Big 12's slippage. If Clemson falls, the ACC will reinforce its status as the stepchild of the Power 5.

If you don't believe the playoff's impact on conference reputation, remember last year. Ohio State flipped the perception of the Big Ten, and the Buckeyes' sudden rise combined with

the arrival of Jim Harbaugh at Michigan elevated the entire conference. The committee left out TCU and Baylor, the co-champions many believed would have been worthy. Oklahoma has the chance to suggest the Big 12 deserved representation last season and prove it shouldn't be passed over again in the future.

"It really hurt us," Sooners defensive lineman Charles Tapper said.

"There were two teams that should have been in it. They could definitely been in the playoffs and probably won the playoffs. If we go out there and we dominate, the Big 12 would definitely take a big step up."

To be sure, not all the participants are as preoccupied by measuring conferences. "I definitely think a lot of guys in the ... Big 12? Is it Big 12?" Clemson linebacker Ben Boulware said. "Big Ten or Big 12, I get them confused. I definitely think a lot of guys in the Big 12 are happy to have Oklahoma represent them."

The college football playoff committee is not supposed to take prior seasons into account when it chooses the best four teams. As OU Coach Bob Stoops said, "Every year is a new year." But the committee is composed of

humans, and humans are nothing if not a collection of biases. They can say the way conferences stack up in significant games will not leave an imprint on their selections. Perception, though, is hard to sandblast from a brain. The winner of this year's playoff games could well impact the composition of next year's bracket.

It can also affect recruiting classes. SEC coaches can no longer tell recruits that they won't play for national titles if they choose a Big Ten or ACC school - Ohio State and Florida State proved it false. The Big 12, meanwhile, has not won a national championship since Vince Young led Texas to the BCS title in 2005. And coaches use conference standing as a weapon in recruiting.

"They're always talking about conferences," Kearse said. "They know guys want to play against the best, play with the best. So that comes up a lot. When the SEC school is coming to you, that's the first thing they say: 'Wouldn't you like to play in the SEC?'"

For Clemson and Oklahoma, a lesser bowl may have provided a clue to the relative strength of each conference. Tuesday in the Russell Athletic Bowl - the game in which Clemson

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battered Oklahoma, 40-6, last year - the Big 12's Baylor thumped ACC runner-up North Carolina.

On Thursday, the Tigers and Sooners will render that matchup wholly irrelevant, and add their own arguments to the ongoing conference warfare, whatever that means or doesn't.

"It's really just about Clemson and Oklahoma right now," Boulware said. "It is ACC versus Big 12. Whatever. We're focused on Clemson."

## Haley attending Orange Bowl

South Carolina governor

Nikki Haley hasn't been shy about her Clemson fandom.

She met her husband her first day on campus, wears orange on game days despite living in Columbia and even texts with Tigers coach Dabo Swinney on occasion. Early in the

month, she mentioned following the team if it reached the College Football Playoff, and on the eve of the Orange Bowl, she will, in fact, make the trip.

Clemson faces Oklahoma at 4 p.m. Thursday.

— STAFF REPORTS



Title: **S.C. comes through death and destruction with hope**  
 Author: BY JEFFREY COLLINS AND BRUCE SMITH Associated Press  
 Size: 244.43 square inch  
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## LOOKING BACK ON 2015

# S.C. comes through death and destruction with hope

.....  
**Charleston mayor's 40th and final year in office a trying one for him, and for the state**  
 .....

.....  
**Shooting death of unarmed black man symbol of national debate over police shootings**  
 .....

.....  
**Confederate battle flag finally came down from Statehouse, then flood waters came up**  
 .....

BY JEFFREY COLLINS AND  
 BRUCE SMITH

Associated Press

*The police shooting of an unarmed black man in North Charleston. The killing of nine people during Bible study at a historic African-American church in Charleston. Historic flooding that dropped nearly half their yearly rain fall in less than two days. The Confederate flag flown on the Statehouse grounds coming down after multiple other*

*efforts had failed. The past year has been one of significant change for South Carolina. Here are a series of snapshots about the key moments and players in 2015:*

## WALTER SCOTT

Before his death was shown around the world

and he became a symbol of the ongoing debate over police shootings of unarmed African-Americans, Walter Scott was just a 50-year-old forklift driver at a warehouse and a father behind on his child support payments.

He was pulled over on April 4 for a broken brake light by North Charleston Officer Michael Slager.

People go to jail all the time in South Carolina for missing child support payments and Scott, who was behind on his, called his mother from his car to say he might need her help getting bail.

Moments later, he ran from his car and around the corner. Slager ran after him toward a vacant field. A passer-by captured what

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happened next on his cellphone. The video showed Slager firing eight shots at Scott's back. Scott was struck by several bullets and fell.

The shooting happened in a city whose officers

faced years of accusations of mistreating minorities.

Scott's family called for calm, especially after Slager's swift arrest, saying they did not want Scott's memory soiled by violence.

A co-worker of Scott said at the time it was a fitting tribute. "He wouldn't hurt a fly, man," Ronald Smith said.

### JOE RILEY

In his 40th and final year as Charleston's mayor, Joe Riley faced his most trying time.

The man who steered the city through Hurricane Hugo in 1989 found his toughest moments on a hot, sticky summer night when what he called "pure, pure concentrated evil" came to a church in

his 345-year-old city.

After a call at 9:30 p.m. June 17, Riley hurried to historic Emanuel AME Church where nine black parishioners had been shot and killed during a Bible study.

In the days following, Riley again became the face of the historic city, comforting victims, attending funerals and being a voice of calm.

"I knew that in this incident everything I did, everything I said, had to be perfect," to ensure calm prevailed, Riley said.

The city — and indeed the whole nation — seemed to come together in the wake of the shootings, with thousands gathering on the sweeping Ravenel Bridge over the Cooper River in a show of unity several days later. President Obama and other dignitaries traveled to Charleston to pay their respects for those who died. More than \$5 million has been donated by thousands of people to help support the victims' families and fund college

scholarships for Charleston-area students.

Riley has made it clear that he will continue to work on the issue of gun violence after he leaves office.

"We do not want to encroach on law-abiding citizens' rights to own a gun but we must prevent guns from falling into the wrong hands," Riley said at an event earlier this month at Emanuel to announce a new effort to curb gun violence.

The suspected killer in the Charleston shootings, Dylan Roof, was able to buy the gun that was used in the shootings because of a record keeping problem that prevented federal officials from disqualifying him before a three-day deadline expired.

### RUSSELL OTT

Russell Ott knew that the Confederate flag fly-

ing outside the South Carolina statehouse had to come down, and it had to come down now — not later.

The eyes of the nation and the world were squarely focused on his place of work and the little known 37-year-old House member who took over his dad's seat back in 2013 was having trouble believing what was happening. He hadn't made a passionate speech imploring his colleagues to let go of the symbol of a bygone era, but he firmly believed it was time for it to happen and he didn't want to see the Legislature and the state blow their chance of having it happen and risk looking like fools or obstructionists.

Gov. Nikki Haley had said less than a week after the slayings at Emanuel AME Church that the flag should come down and the state Senate had reached the same conclusion.

But as the sun set on July 8, the people who wanted the flag removed were stunned. Flag supporters in the House suddenly appeared to have

SEE 2015, 6A

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## 2015

### FROM PAGE 5A

enough votes for an amendment to the bill backed by Haley and the Senate that would postpone its passage, keeping the rebel banner flying outside the chambers. The flag supporters wanted a guarantee that the flag would be sent to a museum and they were willing to hold up the process for it, even if it meant going against the rising tide of support to bring it down.

Ott has been around the Legislature but never before had been a key figure. He lobbied for farmers for nearly a decade before replacing his dad and in three years had been the sponsor of one bill that has become law — creating a migratory waterfowl committee. But he knew parliamentary rules and he knew there was an arcane, rarely used way that he could get the flag supporters what they

wanted and also keep the state on pace to bring the banner down.

His goal was simple. The longer the debate went on, the more likely it was that the whole process would get derailed.

He and his colleagues went to work, twisting arms, holding last-minute votes and watching the clock tick past midnight to allow them to vote on the final measure during a new day.

At 1 a.m. the bill finally passed. On July 10, the flag finally came down. In South Carolina, however, the debate over the fate of the flag still rages on.

#### MAJ. GEN. ROBERT LIVINGSTON

It was the most important mission of South Carolina National Guard commander Maj. Gen. Robert Livingston's life, directing thousands of soldiers and civilians during South Carolina's historic floods.

Livingston was a true

soldier working with Gov. Nikki Haley to carry out her wishes and by her side when she gave the public updates.

But people around the state left little doubt that Livingston's preparation in the days and years before the floods, and his decisive action as the disaster unfolded, prevented a terrible situation from being so much worse.

"We were rescuing people at the same time we were putting things together back in Columbia," Livingston said.

Livingston helped get clean water into the pipes at Columbia hospitals worried about how many critically ill patients might die if they had to close and move them. His soldiers saved dozens of lives with air and boat rescues and helped repair washed out roads and bridges. They averted what would have been a disaster on top of a disaster by keeping Columbia's water

system running and water coming from almost 400,000 taps by fixing a canal breach and laying pipe to get water into the treatment plant.

"A lot of the guys who were doing a lot of discussion had built roads and dams and things like that down in Ecuador and Honduras and places like that back in the 1980s and 90s," Livingston said. "They understood building structures in less than ideal conditions."

Now Livingston laughs that he has another set of problems, created by well-meaning South Carolinians who poured kindness at his soldiers for weeks.

"The support from the people of South Carolina was just tremendous," Livingston said "I'm having to put half of my soldiers on the weight control program now because they got fed so many doughnuts, cookies and everything else."



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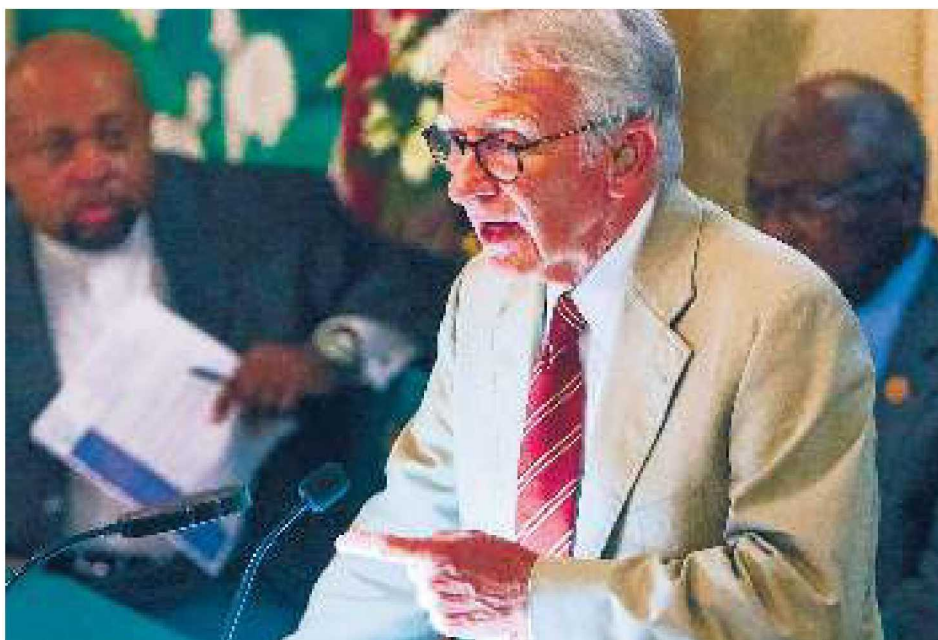


MATT WALSH The (Columbia) State

A man pulls his boat out of flood water after parts of South Carolina were submerged in October amid heavy rains and failed dams.



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TIM DOMINICK tdominick@thestate.com

Charleston Mayor Joe Riley speaks at a prayer vigil for the people killed in Emanuel AME Church in Charleston in June. "I knew that in this incident everything I did, everything I said, had to be perfect," to ensure calm prevailed, said Riley, who is retiring.

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JOHN BAZEMORE AP

An honor guard from the Highway Patrol removes the Confederate battle flag from the Statehouse grounds in Columbia on July 10, ending its 54-year presence there.

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FEIDIN SANTANA AP

In this image from video, Walter Scott struggles with police officer Michael Thomas Slager in North Charleston on April 4. Moments later, the video shows Slager firing eight shots at Scott's back. Scott's death was shown around the world, and he became a symbol of the ongoing debate over police shootings of unarmed African-Americans.

Title: **SC faith leaders encourage inclusion among religions**  
 Author: BY CASSIE COPE [ccope@thestate.com](mailto:ccope@thestate.com)  
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# SC faith leaders encourage inclusion among religions

BY CASSIE COPE  
[ccope@thestate.com](mailto:ccope@thestate.com)

South Carolina religious leaders encouraged inclusiveness on Tuesday after a leading presidential candidate proposed banning Muslims from entering the country and many politicians announced their opposition to allowing Syrian refugees to resettle in the United States.

Members of Interfaith Partners of South Carolina said they want residents to know the state has a heritage of different religions coexisting.

"We have a very large and very vibrant faith-based state here," said Will Moreau Goins, chairman of Interfaith Partners and representing Native American Spirituality.

During January, Interfaith Partners, which aims to foster understanding and cooperation among religious groups, will hold events encouraging interaction between South Carolinians with different religious backgrounds as part of the fourth Interfaith Harmony Month.

**FROM PAGE 3A**

## FAITH

land County, and a family of 11 refugees is expected to follow.

Haley, who was raised a Sikh but later converted to Christianity, signed a proc-

The events range from a Baha'i devotional service to Native American winter storytelling.

Leaders encouraged understanding at a time when Muslims are being singled out based on the acts of extremist groups.

Muslims have lived peacefully in South Carolina for three centuries, said Carl Evans, a Christian and past president of Interfaith Partners. Now, the fear of extremists is feeding suspicion, fear, hostility, hateful speech, and demands for exaggerated scrutiny against an entire religious population, he said, reading a statement adopted by the Interfaith Partners board.

For example, leading Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump proposed a temporary ban on Muslim travelers from entering the United States in the wake of attacks in Paris and California.

"Misinformation is rooted in fear that is being spread around our country," Evans said, adding that fear is spread

by some presidential candidates for political gain.

Chaudhry Sadiq, a Muslim, said Trump's narrow-mindedness means the New York billionaire does not deserve to be an American leader. Sadiq said he condemns extremist terrorists who claim to represent Islam.

Evans, a retired University of South Carolina religion professor, said peace in America depends on people valuing diversity without perceiving differences as a threat.

In addition, Interfaith Partners welcomes Syrian refugees fleeing death and destruction of a civil war in their home country, he said.

S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley has requested that Syrians not be allowed to relocate in the state because of security concerns. However, two Syrian refugees have been resettled in Rich-

**SEE FAITH, 7A**

lamation declaring January Interfaith Harmony Month.

People often fear others who are different or have different customs and traditions, Evans said.

"The way to overcome

that, we think, is to cross religious lines to become friends and neighbors of people of other faiths."

Cassie Cope: 803-771-8657,  
[@cassielcope](https://twitter.com/cassielcope)



Title: **\$1.6B mystery project gets OK**  
 Author: BY DON WORTHINGTON [dworthington@heraldonline.com](mailto:dworthington@heraldonline.com)  
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## CHESTER COUNTY DEVELOPMENT

# \$1.6B mystery project gets OK

**\$1.6 billion plant would be largest single investment in South Carolina**

**Company name to be released at groundbreaking ceremony**

**Plant is expected to create about 1,400 jobs**

BY DON WORTHINGTON  
[dworthington@heraldonline.com](mailto:dworthington@heraldonline.com)  
 CHESTER

The Chester County Council approved giving tax breaks Tuesday as part of an economic development package to bring a \$1.6 billion manufacturing facility to the county.

The council, without discussion, approved an ordinance for "Project 1429" which could employ as many as 1,400 people.

County officials declined to identify the company or to say where the plant will be built. They said the information will be made

public by the company at a February or March groundbreaking ceremony that will likely be attended by Gov. Nikki Haley.

Before approving the ordinance to grant tax incentives, the council held a public hearing on the project. The only information provided before the meeting for residents was its potential investment and jobs it would create and that it was a cellulosic renewable diesel facility.

**SEE CHESTER PLANT, 7A**

**FROM PAGE 1A**

## CHESTER PLANT

No resident spoke at any of the three public hearings on economic development matters Tuesday.

Before the vote on Project 1429, councilman John Wayne Holcombe asked if there was any more information on the project. But after the vote, Holcombe said it was his mistake; he said he had forgotten that details would not be released at the meeting.

Councilman Alex Oliphant did

not attend Tuesday's meeting. He has excused himself from deliberations about the project because he owns property that could be affected.

County attorney Joan Winters said state law allows Chester County to keep the company's name confidential. She said once the project becomes public there would be other opportunities for public comment such as the state Department of Health and Environmental Control's permit-

ting process.

DHEC officials said Tuesday the agency has not received an application for this project, and it has not permitted a facility of this type before.

"Without knowing more about the process and the type and quantity of emissions expected, we cannot determine what type of air permit, if any, would be needed at this time," said DHEC spokesman Jim Beasley.

County Administrator Shane

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Stuart said Tuesday keeping the company name's confidential is in the best interest of Chester County residents. He declined to comment further.

County officials have continually cited that giving too many details on possible economic prospects could kill a deal. Not releasing company names before a public hearing or final vote is a practice county officials have used for various economic development projects, including the recent recruitment of Giti Tire.

Other counties, such as Lancaster and York, typically require the company be named before a public hearing.

John Crangle, executive director of Common Cause South Carolina, said secrecy that

shrouds economic development projects is a "longstanding practice in the state." He said the only cure would be for the state Department of Commerce to have a public checklist to release information on tax breaks, land grants or other incentives.

He said the company name, or at least a detailed description of

the project, should be available to residents before a public hearing so they can research the company.

Karlisa Parker, Chester County's economic development director, said the company has been thoroughly reviewed by county officials and that eight years ago affected residents had the chance to comment on the project without knowing the name of the company. She said residents asked for one change that the company said it was willing to make.

"We have held their (the company's) feet to fire on that," Parker said.

In August 2007, The Herald reported Chester County was being considered for two plants that would make ethanol, one using corn, the other using wood chips and other debris from the logging industry. At the time, Parker said the business planning a wood-based ethanol plant has vast experience with cellulosic ethanol technology.

Parker said Tuesday the corn-based ethanol plant was no long-

er being considered for Chester County.

As planned, Project 1429 would be the largest single, economic development investment in South Carolina history, when compared to statistics provided by the state Department of Commerce.

The largest previous economic development project, by investment, was Bridgestone Americas at \$1.2 billion, according to the commerce department.

The investment is almost three times larger than the \$560 million Giti Tire plant under construction near Richburg. The Giti plant is expected to create 1,700 jobs.

Projects of this size typically qualify for a variety of state incentives. It is the state Department of Commerce's policy not to comment on possible projects.

Similar projects typically also need railroad access to ship raw materials and finished product.

*Don Worthington:*  
 803-329-4066, [@rherald\\_donw](mailto:@rherald_donw)



Title: **\$1.6billion mysteryproject getstaxdeal**  
 Author: BY DON WORTHINGTON [dworthington@heraldonline.com](mailto:dworthington@heraldonline.com)  
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## CHESTER COUNTY COUNCIL

# \$1.6 billion mystery project gets tax deal

**\$1.6 billion plant would be largest single investment in S.C.**

**Company name to be released at groundbreaking ceremony**

**Plant is expected to create about 1,400 jobs**

BY DON WORTHINGTON

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**SEE PROJECT, 6A**

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# PROJECT

## FROM PAGE 1A

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Other counties such as Lancaster and York typically require the company be named before a public hearing.

John Crangle, executive director of Common Cause South Carolina, said secrecy that shrouds economic development projects is a "longstanding practice in the state." He said the only cure would be for the state Department of Commerce to have a public checklist to release information on tax breaks, land grants or other incentives.

He said the company name, or at least a detailed description of the project, should be available to residents before a public hearing so they can research the company.

Karlisa Parker, Chester County's economic development director, said the company has been thoroughly reviewed by county officials and that eight years ago affected resi-

dents had the chance to comment on the project without knowing the name of the company. She said residents asked for one change that the company said it was willing to make.

"We have held their (the company's) feet to fire on that," Parker said.

In August 2007, The Herald reported Chester County was being considered for two plants that would make ethanol, one using corn, the other using wood chips and other debris from the logging industry. At the time, Parker said the business planning a wood-based ethanol plant has vast experience with cellulosic ethanol technology.

Parker said Tuesday the corn-based ethanol plant was no longer being considered for Chester County.

As planned, Project 1429 would be the largest single, economic development

investment in South Carolina history, when compared to statistics provided by the state Department of Commerce.

The largest previous economic development project, by investment, was Bridgestone Americas at \$1.2 billion, according to the commerce department.

The investment is almost three times larger than the \$560 million Giti Tire plant under construction near Richburg. The Giti plant is expected to create 1,700 jobs.

Projects of this size typically qualify for a variety of state incentives. It is the state Department of Commerce's policy not to comment on possible projects.

Similar projects typically also need railroad access to ship raw materials and finished product.

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