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To:
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Subject: Morning Clips – Monday, August 1, 2016

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

Post and Courier: Mercedes-Benz groundbreaking highlights Lowcountry's fast-growing auto sector
<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160731/160739908/mercedes-benz-groundbreaking-highlights-lowcountrys-fast-growing-auto-sector>

Thad Moore

As Mercedes-Benz prepared to break ground on its new factory in North Charleston last week, company executives and politicians pointed again and again to the back of the room, to the workers already assembling vans here. Since 2006, the German automaker has built cargo vans in Dusseldorf, disassembled a few systems and sent them here in parts to avoid costly tariffs. A group of about 200 workers puts them back together, spending a few hours to get each vehicle ready to drive. The company's new, full-fledged manufacturing campus, tasked with supplying America's growing demand for Sprinter vans, will have far more extensive work — and far more employees. Executives say it could eventually employ as many as 1,300 people, and it'll start taking applications toward the middle of 2017. That's a big boost for the region's manufacturing sector. About 11,000 people in the Lowcountry worked last year in the business of building cars and planes, a number that has roughly doubled over the past decade, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

NOTE: State and local groups have ramped up their efforts in recent years to steer young people toward manufacturing jobs — and to shake their reputation as dirty and underpaid. For their part, state officials including Gov. Nikki Haley say they're not worried about filling the openings, saying they haven't had issues doing so in the past.

NOTE: The pair of projects also means the region will need to grow a workforce trained to build cars and auto parts. The state will provide training programs specific to Mercedes-Benz and Volvo, Haley said Wednesday, with plans to send officials to their factories overseas to learn the companies' existing processes.

The State: SC's long-ignored child safety net slowly mends

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article92827677.html>

Jamie Self

Natalie Thompson says she whispered in her nephew's ear whenever she could. " 'Yeah, you going to be OK. ... You're going to be fine.' " Despite her furtive promises to her nephew — meant to evade the boy's parents, whom Thompson was reporting to the S.C. Department of Social Services for abusing the child — 4-year-old Robert Guinyard was beaten to death with a metal rod in his home in 2013. Today, the autistic boy's parents, convicted of homicide by child abuse, are serving life sentences. Recently, Robert's estate won a \$590,000 settlement from the state, according to Joyce Cheeks, the family's attorney. The suit alleged Social Services ignored reports from Thompson and others that Robert was being abused. Social Services had forewarning Robert's mother was dangerous, the suit added, having investigated her for child abuse before.

NOTE: S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley's Social Services director, Lillian Koller, resigned in mid-2014 amid

mounting criticism and calls for new leadership.

NOTE: To help with that effort, state lawmakers – with Gov. Nikki Haley's encouragement – are spending more than they have in a long time on Social Services.

NOTE: South Carolina has more children in need of foster homes than it does families to shelter them, the governor noted. To address that shortfall, Social Services, with Haley's encouragement, has launched a program to recruit more foster families and make easier for them to start fostering children.

NOTE: Haley also said giving smartphones to all front-line caseworkers has helped make their jobs easier.

NOTE: Taking office in 2011, in the wake of the Great Recession, Haley made jobs her top priority. Koller, Haley's former child-welfare director, focused largely on getting South Carolinians off welfare.

NOTE: After Koller's exit, Haley said she had no idea that Social Services, which reports directly to the governor, had caseload problems.

SC Political News:

McClatchy DC: Women have come a long way, baby, but not in SC politics

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/national/article92631082.html>

Vera Bergengruen

Young girls who watched Hillary Clinton's historic nomination last week are growing up in a very different South Carolina than their mothers and grandmothers did. A female governor is running their state. And a woman could soon become their country's commander in chief. Women and girls have more educational opportunities and career options than ever before. But most women who want to run for office themselves would still find it difficult to break through in their home state. "South Carolina is South Carolina – it can be really hard getting people to come around," said Republican state Sen. Katrina Shealy, who was elected in 2012 to what was at the time the country's only all-male Senate. "We have great people, but it's still been hard to get them to accept women in a leadership role." The Palmetto State still has the second-lowest percentage of women in the state legislature in the nation, tied with Oklahoma at 14.1 percent, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Two of South Carolina's 46 senators and 22 of the 124 state representatives are women.

NOTE: "There has been a decline in the respectfulness of our public debate," College of Charleston political science professor Kendra Stewart said. "Hillary Clinton by her own admission has developed a thick skin; Nikki Haley too; but I can see a lot of women who don't want to go through that or put their families through that."

NOTE: Several experts boiled it down to three things: "right woman, right message, right time." "It explains a lot of Nikki Haley's success, as well as Hillary Clinton's and Sarah Palin's," Kedrowski said.

Post and Courier: Graham: Trade agreements would give South Carolina auto industry a boost

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160731/160739969/graham-trade-agreements-would-give-south-carolina-auto-industry-a-boost>

To South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, there is no greater argument in favor of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, or TTIP, than the hoops Mercedes-Benz Vans has had to jump through this past decade to sell its popular Sprinter vans in the United States. A 25 percent tariff on light trucks imported to the U.S. from Germany has forced Dusseldorf-based Mercedes-Benz Vans to ship its Sprinters to the Port of Charleston in pieces, only to be reassembled after they reach the company's North Charleston campus. The convoluted maneuver lets Mercedes-Benz Vans avoid the

53-year-old tariff, but creates a “huge burden” and “a logistical nightmare” for the company, according to Volker Mornhinweg, who runs the van maker. “Wouldn’t it be nice to have a world where you could trade with people in Germany and in South Carolina without having to go through all that mess?” Graham asked last week. Soon, the tariff will no longer pose a problem for Mercedes-Benz Vans. The company last week broke ground on a full-fledged, \$500 million manufacturing site that will make Sprinters from scratch at the company’s Palmetto Commerce Park site. The facility, which will employ up to 1,300 people, will start making Sprinters for sale in North America by the end of this decade.

SC Agency News:

Post and Courier: DHEC taking action against James Island senior living facility after resident’s death

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160731/160739882/dhec-taking-action-against-james-island-senior-living-facility-after-residents-death>

Angie Jackson

The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control is taking enforcement action against a James Island senior living facility after a resident with severe dementia wandered off and was found dead in a marsh in May. State investigators uncovered several violations at Savannah Place, at 1501 Secessionville Road, including inoperable door alarms when 80-year-old Marie Duddy walked away from the home on May 20, according to the investigation report. Duddy was found dead the following day in a marsh area in a neighborhood adjacent to the facility. It was determined that she most likely left through a controlled entrance at the front of the building. Doors at Savannah Place typically remain locked and have an audible alarm. On the day Duddy went missing, the paging system that notifies staff of an open exterior door was not working, according to the report.

Associated Press: Emergency bridge repairs close I-26 east lane near Newberry

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=6bol7g1E

SC State Wire

Officials are warning of delays for travelers on Interstate 26 heading from Spartanburg to Columbia because of emergency bridge repairs. The South Carolina Department of Transportation said road crews closed one lane of eastbound I-26 near mile marker 81 east of Newberry Sunday night to repair the deck of the bridge over the Palmetto Trail. The DOT says it plans to finish the repairs by Friday. About 42,000 vehicles drive on that part of I-26 each day. Several other bridges in the state have had to close in the past few years for similar repairs

Savannah River Site/MOX News:

Aiken Standard: Nuclear Regulatory Committee cites violations at MOX project

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/20160731/160809998/nuclear-regulatory-committee-cites-violations-at-mox-project>

Thomas Gardiner

In a letter and report this week, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission outlined two violations at the already contentious Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility, or MOX. The following day, another letter was sent to announce the findings of another investigation into allegations of misconduct at the facility. The investigation came after an October inspection in 2015 found potential safety and construction guideline violations. The inspection report noted issues with ledgers designed to support floor panels in one of the operations areas. According to previous reporting from the Aiken Standard, the NRC noted in the 2015 report that measures to assure that requirements were correctly

translated by CB&I MOX Services, the MOX contractor, into design documents were inadequate. Meaning, the ledgers installed weren't properly checked to be in accordance with the design documents. The new report stated the ledgers were undersize, less than specified length, undercut and had code prohibited joint design. But, it also said no actual personnel safety or nuclear safety consequences resulted from the deficient ledger assembly welds.

SC after Police Shootings:

The State: At National Night Out event, Midlands residents take a stand against neighborhood crime
<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/crime/article92969932.html>

Glen Luke Flanagan

Midlands residents will be out in their neighborhoods Tuesday in a show of crime prevention for National Night Out – but before they do, some got an early start Sunday with the annual kick-off celebration in Columbia. This is the ninth year city officials and the Columbia Police Department have hosted the event to get folks excited about National Night Out, said Lt. Ron Felder. The Sunday afternoon event gave citizens a chance to get to know Columbia police officers, Richland County deputies and neighborhood organizers. West Columbia resident Rhonda Baumgardner, 32, said her neighborhood is pretty safe – and that National Night Out helps keep it that way. National Night Out takes place each year on the first Tuesday in August in thousands of neighborhoods across the United States, according to the program's website. The goal is to reduce crime and build relationships between police and citizens. "I definitely think it plays a huge role in keeping neighborhoods safe, especially for little kids," Baumgardner said.

South Carolina News:

Sun News: Taxpayers get a break this weekend in South Carolina

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/news/local/article92985467.html>

Christian Boschult

Shoppers get ready. At 12:01 a.m. on Friday, the 6 percent state sales tax on most clothes, housewares items and school supplies will be temporarily lifted until Sunday at midnight. "The purpose of the tax-free weekend is to give back-to-school shoppers a bit of relief when it comes to making their purchases every year to get ready for school," said Lindsey Kueffner, the executive director of the South Carolina Retail Association. Supplies such as pencils, pens, notebooks and book bags are tax free. So are computers and printers, but not their replacement parts. "Computers are included in there because they're considered a back-to-school item," said Kueffner. Housewares such as sheets, towels, pillows and shower curtains are also tax free, but the curtain rods, hooks and rings will be taxed. Mattresses and furniture will be taxed as well. Those items are tax free because they could potentially be dorm furnishings for college students, Kueffner said. Other dorm items such as refrigerators, bathroom accessories, cookware and alarm clocks aren't included.

The State: What's tax free — and what's not — during SC's tax-free weekend

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article92989392.html>

A sure sign that students will soon be heading back to school is South Carolina's annual tax-free weekend. Each year, beginning on the first Friday of August, the state eliminates all sales and user taxes on dozens of items. This year, the state's 6 percent sales tax — along with local sales taxes — will be eliminated from 12:01 a.m. Friday through midnight on Sunday. The tax-free weekend helps parents and students save money as they gear up for another school year. But not everything is tax free. Here's a look at some of the items you can purchase without paying the sales tax — and some

items that will still be taxed. To take a quiz about the state's tax-free items, visit thestate.com/business. You'll also find a more complete list of items that are tax free and those that aren't.

Local News:

Post and Courier: Fatal home invasion suspect brought back to South Carolina after capture in Virginia

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160731/160739883/fatal-home-invasion-suspect-brought-back-to-south-carolina-after-capture-in-virginia>

Angie Jackson

A suspect in a fatal home invasion in Huger has been brought back to South Carolina following his capture in Virginia. Sherrod Deon Palmer, 23, whose last known address was on S.C. Highway 41 in Huger, faces seven criminal charges, including murder, in connection with the July 21 shooting death of 27-year-old Kadeem Johnson. Records show he is also charged with attempted murder, two counts of kidnapping, two counts of armed robbery and first-degree burglary. Palmer appeared in bond court Saturday. Deputies said he was one of five men who forced their way into a mobile home at 135 Martha Lane in Francis Marion National Forest around 2:30 a.m. and shot Johnson, who lived there. A woman inside was wounded. The Sheriff's Office said the killing was a targeted hit and not a random crime.

Associated Press: 2 facing charges in death of Anderson woman

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=fJLFW1Fz

SC State Wire

Two people have been arrested in the shooting death of an Anderson woman. Local media outlets report 23-year-old Chevis Morris and Jordan Hart were arrested Sunday and charged with murder, first-degree burglary and grand larceny. Authorities say 38-year-old Jennifer Poore was airlifted to a hospital after she was shot at her home at around 8:30 p.m. Saturday. She later died of a gunshot wound to the chest. Morris and Hart were jailed, awaiting a bond hearing. It wasn't immediately clear if they had attorneys.

Associated Press: Man dead in weekend shooting in North Charleston

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=SG2I90vT

SC State Wire

North Charleston police are investigating a fatal weekend shooting. Police spokesman Spencer Pryor tells local media outlets it happened just before midnight Friday outside a home in the city. Police have not made an arrest but say a man walked toward a group of people standing outside the home and shouted something when people in the group shouted back. The man then ran off but fired a gun back at the group as he did, hitting and killing another man. The victim's name has not yet been released.

Associated Press: Police say 1 man dead, 1 wounded in Columbia shooting

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

SC State Wire

Authorities say one man has been killed and another wounded after a shooting in Columbia. Media outlets report Richland County Coroner Gary Watts says an autopsy shows that 23-year-old Donquiese D. Green of Columbia died Saturday from a gunshot wound to the upper body. Columbia police say witnesses told officers that several people were hanging out that afternoon when a silver or gray vehicle drove up. An argument between males in the vehicle and Green as well as another

person escalated and shots were fired from the vehicle. Witnesses told police that the vehicle sped off after the shooting. Police Chief Skip Holbrook says Green was pronounced dead at the hospital. The other victim was treated for gunshot wounds. The shooting remains under investigation.

Post and Courier: Charlie O's shooting victims suing owner for negligence

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160731/160809989/charlie-os-shooting-victims-suing-owner-for-negligence>

Melissa Boughton

Three people who were shot at a Dorchester Road nightclub last year are suing the business owner for negligence. Antwonina Heyward and twin brothers Jamar and Omar Hamilton each filed a civil lawsuit July 19 against Charles Middleton Jr., doing business as Charlie O's. They were among four people shot Feb. 22, 2015, at the club, located at 4224 Dorchester Road. Heyward was 20 at the time and she was shot in the arm. The Hamiltons were 23 at the time and were each shot in the stomach, according to the Charleston County Sheriff's Office. Brandon Lemar Greene, 24 at the time, was shot in the leg. He filed a civil lawsuit against Middleton in March. Charlie O's, the scene of multiple shootings over the years, has since closed. Charleston County spokesman Shawn Smetana said the owner does not have a 2016 business license but it was not shut down by local government. Maj. Eric Watson said it also was not shut down as a result of law enforcement action.

Associated Press : Police: Greenwood woman stabbed to death, suspect arrested

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

SC State Wire

Officials say a suspect has been taken into custody in the stabbing death of a Greenwood woman. Greenwood City Police Capt. Mitchell McAllister tells media outlets that Minnie Rankin was arrested and charged with murder in the death of 39-year-old Andrea Dannielle Paxton. The Greenwood County Coroner's Office says Paxton was stabbed multiple times early Sunday morning. McAllister says Paxton was wounded after a fight broke out a home. He says the fight was in reference to an assault earlier in the evening. Paxton was taken to a hospital, where she died. McAllister says Rankin was also charged with possession of a weapon during the commission of a violent crime in connection with the incident. It isn't immediately clear if Rankin has an attorney. The investigation is ongoing.

Associated Press : Crews search for man who went missing while tubing on lake

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=RebAhH8I

SC State Wire

Authorities are continuing to search for a South Carolina man who went missing while tubing on White Lake. Media outlets report North Carolina wildlife officials say 36-year-old Kendrick Lavor Dials of Florence, South Carolina, went missing Saturday afternoon on the lake, which is about 40 miles south of Fayetteville. Officials say Dials was riding in an inner-tube behind a boat when he fell off the tube and disappeared into the water. Bladen County Director of Emergency Services Bradley Kinlaw says several crews spent the weekend searching for Dials. Officials are using sonar detection, K-9 units, a drone, and a helicopter in the efforts.

Associated Press: Police: Man dies after boating accident on Congaree River

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=e9ZRIBov

SC State Wire

Authorities are investigating the death of a man on the Congaree River. Local media outlets report an autopsy is scheduled Sunday to determine the cause of death for 63-year-old Marvin Browne of

Gaston. The Cayce Police Department says Browne and another man were boating on the river at around noon Saturday when their 10-foot boat capsized. Browne didn't know how to swim. Several swimmers nearby pulled Browne to shore, but he died on the scene. The other man was hospitalized for exhaustion. Neither man was wearing a life vest. Police are still investigating what caused the boat to capsize.

Independent Mail: VIDEO: Ready to serve: Pendleton police go back to work

<http://www.independentmail.com/news/ready-to-serve-pendleton-police-go-back-to-work-38f8f6db-a50e-3ed2-e053-0100007f9455--388795061.html>

Kirk Brown

After a decade-long hiatus, the Pendleton Police Department will go back to work today. Police Chief Doyle Burdette and his department's two officers spent more than an hour Sunday meeting scores of residents on the village green. "We are really looking forward to working with the community — working with our citizens, our businesses, churches, schools, everybody in the community — to help the problems that Pendleton has as far as law enforcement is concerned," Burdette said. "I am excited because this event in itself shows the support we have and with support like this there's nothing that we can't do." In an effort to save money, the town disbanded its police department in 2006 and turned its law enforcement duties over to the Anderson County Sheriff's Office. Responding to an outcry from residents, the Pendleton Town Council decided last year to bring back the police department.

The Herald : Rock Hill school security leader: 'We need our kids to feel safe'

<http://www.heraldonline.com/news/local/education/article92956637.html>

Jennifer Becknell

Kevin Wren served on a school safety committee in high school and later trained and worked as a firefighter, EMT and school resource officer. "I have been trying to get this job since I was 15," joked Wren, the Rock Hill school district's director of risk, safety and emergency management. Wren earned a national honor for his work last week. He was named national safety Director of the Year for K-12 schools by Campus Safety magazine. He was chosen from 10 finalists named earlier this year. He was named a winner of the ninth annual awards during a conference in Washington, D.C. Wren and Rock Hill schools' safety program are to be featured this fall in Campus Safety magazine and on its website, CampusSafetyMagazine.com. Wren, who took the Rock Hill schools job in 2013, attributed much of his success to the groundwork that was laid by others before he arrived. "You are not going to learn anything until you feel safe, so we need our kids to feel safe," Wren said. "And we want our parents to feel safe about sending their kids to learn with us."

The State: Schools plan to stay green despite end to free recycling pickup

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/education/article92955587.html>

Sarah Ellis

Recyclables won't be going to waste in many Richland County schools this year after Sonoco Recycling ended its free school pickup service in the county this spring. The Richland 2 school district is working with the county's solid waste department to continue recycling collection at its 42 district campuses. And the county and Columbia both have offered to help Richland 1 schools continue their recycling. Sonoco made the decision to stop collecting recyclables for free from Richland County schools in March because it became too expensive, said Jane Hiller, Sonoco's education liaison in Richland County. Lexington County schools already paid a fee to have their recycling hauled by Sonoco. For years, the international recycling company, based in Hartsville, had been using older hauling trucks to collect from the schools "at a loss" to the company but as a service to the

community, Hiller said. But when those trucks wore out, Sonoco couldn't afford to reinvest in a service that already was losing money, she said.

Post and Courier : Charleston school district cuts to arts education worry teachers, nonprofits
<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160731/160739944/charleston-school-district-cuts-to-arts-education-worry-teachers-nonprofits>

Adam Parker

The Charleston County School District has removed its fine arts coordinator and redefined the job description to include oversight of world languages curriculum. The change is part of a larger overhaul that has some educators worried about the future of arts programming in the public schools. The changes come in the wake of a budget shortfall of \$18 million that's prompted officials to adjust staff allocations at schools across the district, according to Erica Taylor, the district's strategy and communications director. Of the three local school districts, Charleston County is the only one without a dedicated fine arts coordinator. These adjustments aren't confined to arts education, though cuts have rattled arts teachers and nonprofit arts organizations that work closely with area public schools.

The State: Lexington County weighs plan to make eastern half of county look nicer
<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article92943172.html>

Tim Flach

Blight prevention controls may be in place soon for a significantly larger share of Lexington County. County Council is looking at doubling the area in which the standards apply and extending the upkeep requirements to commercial sites as well as homes. The momentum for expansion comes as a one-year test of the idea on the north side of Lake Murray is nearly finished, with cleanup results popular with neighborhood leaders who pushed for its adoption. "It's off to a good start," said former Councilman Art Guerry, president of the Whitehall Homeowners Association in the St. Andrews area. "It does help." Plans taking shape could add more neighborhoods in the eastern half of the county. Areas under consideration include all of the unincorporated area east of I-26, parts of Red Bank and Dixiana and several neighborhoods between West Columbia and Lexington along I-26 and I-20. The largely rural western half of the 758-square-mile county would remain exempt.

Post and Courier : Study: 2 Charleston-area communities among most affordable in S.C.
<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160801/160809990/study-2-charleston-area-communities-among-most-affordable-in-sc>

Warren L. Wise

Two Charleston-area communities are listed among the top 10 most affordable in South Carolina, according to a study by financial technology firm SmartAsset. It measured housing costs relative to income and found unincorporated Ladson and the city of Goose Creek made the cut. Ladson came in at No. 4 with an affordability index of 91.32 out of 100. Its average closing costs is \$3,271, average annual property tax is \$648, annual homeowner's insurance is \$971, average annual mortgage payment is \$5,527, and median income of \$49,359. Goose Creek ranked No. 9 with an affordability index of 89.90. Its average closing costs is \$3,482, average annual property tax is \$902, annual homeowner's insurance is \$1,364, average annual mortgage payment is \$7,765 and median income is \$62,107. Irmo, near Columbia, came in at No. 1 with an affordability index of 92.30. Others on the list, in descending order were: Lugoff, Boiling Springs, Piedmont, Simpsonville, Clover, Fountain Inn and Mauldin. All but Lugoff, which is in the Midlands, are in the Upstate.

Aiken Standard : Megiddo growing in Graniteville while expanding to other communities
<http://www.aikenstandard.com/20160731/160739924/megiddo-growing-in-graniteville-while->

expanding-to-other-communities

Dede Biles

A nonprofit that teaches unemployed adults how to become better job candidates and helps them find work is continuing to grow in the former mill town where it was founded in 2012. Megiddo Dream Station also is offering its assistance to residents in an increasing number of other communities. "We did not ever foresee being anywhere but here in Graniteville, so we're very excited that our message is going out throughout the CSRA," said Megiddo Executive Director Kay Benitez. "By October, we will have a total of eight other locations, and we anticipate expanding throughout South Carolina and the entire Southeast." Outside of the Megiddo's headquarters on Canal Street, the nonprofit's eight-week Work for Success core program currently is being offered at Friendship Baptist Church in Aiken, Second Providence Baptist Church in North Augusta and Hudson Memorial Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in Augusta.

Presidential Election 2016:

Associated Press: Fight with Khan family tests Trump's 'say anything' strategy

<http://bigstory.ap.org/c15dde03b1ae420b88d8dc93f78a591f>

Lisa Lerer and Jonathan Lemire

Donald Trump's presidential bid has thrived on controversy of his own making. Now, the Republican nominee kicks off the first full week of the general election campaign having put his strategy of saying the politically unimaginable to its greatest test yet. Trump broke a major American political and societal taboo over the weekend when he engaged in an emotionally-charged feud with Khizr and Ghazala Khan, the bereaved parents of a decorated Muslim Army captain killed by a suicide bomber in Iraq. He further stoked outrage by implying Ghazala Khan did not speak while standing alongside her husband at last week's Democratic convention because they are Muslim. The outcry was swift and bipartisan, leaving Trump largely isolated among his fellow Republicans and potentially putting at risk whatever progress the New Yorker had made during his convention at winning over the independent voters who will likely decide the fall election.

National News:

Associated Press: Obama pointing to strides in veterans' health care

<http://bigstory.ap.org/e71740b18f99435588e09c77ffdfac71>

Darlene Superville

President Barack Obama is touting strides in reducing homelessness among military veterans as his administration reaches the halfway point in building a massive database on veterans' health. Overall veteran homelessness has been cut nearly in half, by 47 percent, although that's still short of Obama's long-held goal of getting it to zero by 2015. Credit also goes to first lady Michelle Obama and Vice President Joe Biden's wife, Jill, for using their initiative on military families to challenge mayors and county officials nationwide to end veterans' homelessness, the White House says. A half-million veterans have voluntarily given blood samples and health data for a long-term government research program that seeks to enroll 1 million veterans as part of an Obama initiative to make "precision medicine," or tailored treatment, a reality. Those two milestones are being announced Monday when Obama addresses the annual convention of the Disabled American Veterans in Atlanta, the White House said. The appearance before the service organization is a valedictory address by Obama, who ends his eight years in the White House in January.

Associated Press: Texas balloon pilot had been arrested for DWI in 2000

<http://bigstory.ap.org/d5d935c41e7047abae8877957153daa1>

Will Weissert and Emily Schmall

The pilot of a hot air balloon that crashed in Texas and killed all 16 people aboard was arrested in Missouri in 2000 for driving while intoxicated, and the Better Business Bureau warned consumers about doing business with the balloon touring company he used to operate in that state. Authorities haven't publicly named anyone killed in the crash, saying it could take a while to identify the bodies. But Alfred "Skip" Nichols, 49, was identified as the pilot by his friend and roommate Alan Lirette, who said that Nichols was a good pilot. "That's the only thing I want to talk about, is that he's a great pilot," Lirette said, speaking to The Associated Press from a house he shared with Nichols in Kyle, Texas. "There's going to be all kinds of reports out in the press and I want a positive image there too." Authorities say the balloon, which was operated by Heart of Texas Hot Air Balloon Rides, hit high-tension power lines before crashing into a pasture Saturday morning near Lockhart, which is about 60 miles northeast of San Antonio. Margaret Wylie, who lives a quarter-mile from the site, said she heard popping sounds and saw what looked "like a fireball going up."

World News:

Associated Press: Expert to Rio athletes: 'Don't put your head under water'

<http://bigstory.ap.org/2c9894db31b74fc081d7f1ee3f0cf673>

Jenny Barchfield

Just days ahead of the Olympic Games the waterways of Rio de Janeiro are as filthy as ever, contaminated with raw human sewage teeming with dangerous viruses and bacteria, according to a 16-month-long study commissioned by The Associated Press. Not only are some 1,400 athletes at risk of getting violently ill in water competitions, but the AP's tests indicate that tourists also face potentially serious health risks on the golden beaches of Ipanema and Copacabana. The AP's survey of the aquatic Olympic and Paralympic venues has revealed consistent and dangerously high levels of viruses from the pollution, a major black eye on Rio's Olympic project that has set off alarm bells among sailors, rowers and open-water swimmers. The first results of the study published over a year ago showed viral levels at up to 1.7 million times what would be considered worrisome in the United States or Europe. At those concentrations, swimmers and athletes who ingest just three teaspoons of water are almost certain to be infected with viruses that can cause stomach and respiratory illnesses and more rarely heart and brain inflammation — although whether they actually fall ill depends on a series of factors including the strength of the individual's immune system.

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