

From: Symmes, Brian <BrianSymmes@gov.sc.gov>

To:

Date: 2/1/2016 1:38:48 PM

Subject: SC Front Pages – Monday, February 1, 2016

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**SC Front Pages – Monday, February 1, 2016**



## CLEMSON BASKETBALL, 1C TIGERS STILL 'PRETTY GOOD'



## METRO, 3A Group wants GHS free of fast food

# The Greenville News

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

MONDAY,  
FEBRUARY 1, 2016  
GREENVILLEONLINE.COM

USA TODAY ISIS BOMBINGS KILL AT LEAST 50 IN SYRIA AMID SHAKY PEACE TALKS PAGE 1B

## ROAD to the SUPER BOWL

### Pickens native to cheer on Panthers

RON BARNETT  
RBARNETT@GREENVILLENEWS.COM

She cheered for the Pickens Blue Flame in high school and the Clemson Tigers in college.

Now, Dacusville native Leslie Spearman is getting ready to bring her talents to the biggest stage of all — the Super Bowl.

Spearman, a 2010 graduate of Pickens High School and Class of 2014 alumna of Clemson University, will add a bit of Pickens County sparkle on the sidelines as a member of the Carolina Panthers cheerleaders squad, the TopCats.

"I'm ecstatic," she told *The Greenville News*. "I can't wait for it to be here."

From the hills of northern Pickens County to the City by the Bay, it will be a dream come true for Spearman, whose passion for dancing has led her to be a part of the biggest sports event of the year.

"I never thought that going into NFL cheerleading that would ever be a reality," she said. "But it is now, and it's a crazy one."

Spearman, 24, took time out from her schedule as an earth and environmental science teacher at Queen's Grant High School in Matthews, North Carolina, to talk about her road to the Super Bowl.

She took dance classes as a child and continued right up until her senior year in high school.

"That schedule never really allowed us to be involved in other sports," she recalled. "So finally, my



Pickens County native Leslie Spearman, right, is excited about the Super Bowl 50 matchup between the Carolina Panthers and Denver Broncos.

"It's been a blast. Even going into five-hour rehearsals and workouts and all that, it's all fun ..."

LESLIE SPEARMAN  
CAROLINA PANTHERS CHEERLEADER

senior year I said, you know what, I'm going to try out for cheerleading. I'm just gonna do it."

"And I loved it. It made me want to continue."

So when she enrolled at Clemson to seek her teaching degree, she joined the Rally Cats, Clemson's dance team that performs at games and other events.

She was on the team all four years at Clemson, becoming captain her junior and senior years.

After she graduated, she still felt the urge to dance. She loved football, and the Panthers, so she decided to try out for the TopCats.

It was an extensive process involving dance classes, choreography tests, interviews and several rounds of tryouts.

"They finally selected the team based on your overall interview, your dance ability, and your ability, basically, to interact with the public, because that's what we do most of the time," she said.

This is her first year on the 28-member team.

And what a year it has been for Panthers fans.

See SPEARMAN, Page 5A

## Saudis' purchases benefit GE plant

Billions flow into state for power equipment

RUDDOLPH BELL  
DBELL@GREENVILLENEWS.COM

When Sen. Lindsey Graham decries U.S. dependence on Middle Eastern oil — as he has frequently done — it's easy to imagine the U.S. trade relationship with countries such as Saudi Arabia as a one-way street, with the Saudis doing all the selling and the Americans doing all the buying.

In Greenville, however, the Saudis are buying too. And buying a lot.

The Saudi Electricity Co., Saudi Arabia's government-controlled power company, has been one of the best customers of General Electric Co.'s heavy-duty turbine plant in Greenville.

According to GE, the plant on Garlington Road has made more than 270 of the multi-ton, power-producing turbines for Saudi Arabia over the past 15 years. That represents billions of dollars' worth of business since each turbine by itself sells for tens of millions of dollars.

The plant's biggest order to date — a 30-turbine deal announced amid the Great Recession in 2009 — came from Saudi Arabia.

Its latest business from the Desert Kingdom — three turbines for a Saudi Electricity Co. power plant — was announced last month.

GE says it has installed more than 550 of its turbines in Saudi Arabia — though not all of them were made in Greenville — and they generate more than half of the country's electricity. GE declined to identify the Greenville plant's best customer.

The turbine orders from Saudi Arabia are just part of the overseas business that has sustained about 3,200 jobs at GE's manufacturing-and-engineering complex on Garlington Road.

GE, in fact, exports 80 percent the turbines it makes in Greenville, shipping them to countries such as Japan, Mexico, Algeria and South Korea, according to company spokesman Kevin Norris.

Doug Woodward, a research economist with the University of South Carolina's Moore School of Business, said the GE plant is a great example of the role that export-oriented manufacturing plays in the modern South Carolina economy, along with the BMW car plant near Greer and the Boeing aircraft plant in North Charleston and other firms.

Countries such as China and Mexico also buy billions of dollars' worth of South Carolina-made goods, Woodward said.

He said South Carolinians who don't work at exporting employers such as the GE plant may not realize how much the state benefits from international trade.

Sometimes they "think about the negative effects of trade," he said.

## DHEC seeks \$35 million more in state budget

SAMMY FRETWELL  
SFRETWELL@THESTATE.COM

COLUMBIA — Sputtering air monitors, leaking underground storage tanks, mold, lead, asbestos and asbestos fibers build

and the water they swim in need an infusion of cash, according to the state Department of Health and Environmental Control.

Since last fall, agency director Catherine Heigel has been working to build

"The first responsibility lies with me, to make sure you even know what has not been done," said Heigel, who became DHEC director last summer.

DHEC, one of the state's largest agencies, needs the Legislature to fund



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## Churches stand up against gun violence

### Emanuel AME tragedy spurs congregations across S.C. to join grass-roots push for gun-control reforms



Petitions in support of gun control are signed for Stand-Up Sunday outside Holy Trinity Reformed Episcopal Church on Bull Street after the Rev. Anthony Thompson's Sunday morning sermon. The petitions, also signed by roughly 1,300 other houses of worship across the state, will be sent to state lawmakers.

BY MELESSA BOUGHTON and JENNIFER BERRY HAWES  
mboughton@postandcourier.com  
and\_jhawes@postandcourier.com

Less than 24 hours after burying her grandson who was shot to death last week in North Charleston, Carolyn Simmons took a stand against gun violence at a downtown church. "I want to stop all this," she said with despera-

tion in her voice. Her grandson, Lamonte Simmons, 19, died Jan. 23, and two teenagers were subsequently charged with murder. "Too many kids are getting killed for no reason." Simmons attended the Holy Trinity Reformed Episcopal Church on Bull Street, where one of her relatives, the Rev. Anthony Thompson, asked the congregation to sign petitions in support of gun control that will be sent to state lawmakers.

Thompson's wife, Myra Thompson, was one of nine black parishioners at Emanuel AME Church killed during a Bible study June 17 by a self-avowed white supremacist. Thompson joined roughly 1,300 other houses of worship across the state for Stand-Up Sunday, a grass-roots effort to rally the faithful in support of gun-control reform.

Please see **CHURCHES**, Page A4

## Decision: 36 killers could win freedom

### Supreme Court ruling affects S.C. inmates sentenced as juveniles

BY ANDREW KNAPP  
aknapp@postandcourier.com

When his grandson's killer went to trial, Willie Bailey sat in a courtroom and saw the 17-year-old smile. He had noticed the same expression from Anthony Willis Jr. before.

A judge considered that attitude, Bailey said, when Willis was sentenced to life in prison for gunning down Justin Smoot five years ago in Summerville.

But rulings last year by South Carolina's highest court and last week by the nation's top justices have given Willis and at least 36 other inmates statewide a second chance at release sometime in their lives. It's based on the U.S. Supreme Court's view that sentencing people to life without parole for crimes committed when they were 17 or younger violates constitutional



#### Poll

Should South Carolina consider eliminating the lifetime term for 16- and 17-year-olds facing homicide charges? Go to [postandcourier.com/polls](http://postandcourier.com/polls) to vote.

Please see **FREEDOM**, Page A4

## MUSC board OKs rules to curb protests

BY LAUREN SAUSSER  
lsausser@postandcourier.com

The Medical University of South Carolina Board of Trustees unanimously passed several "rules of decorum" during a special meeting on Sunday.

The new rules prohibit members of the public from holding signs during meetings or approaching board members.

The rules also prohibit individuals from interrupting board meetings or using profane language.

Members of the public who violate the rules will be warned, then asked to leave the meeting.

"The decorum policy, in my mind, brings us in line with the current standard across the state," said MUSC President David Cole. "Really, it just catches us up with where we need to be."

The rules will effectively end a series of silent protests that have been staged

Please see **MUSC**, Page A4

## New school lines upset some in Knightsville

### Bradford Chase parents fight move, to no avail

BY PAUL BOWERS  
pbowers@postandcourier.com

Parents in one Knightsville neighborhood say Dorchester District 2 didn't give fair warning before assigning their children to a new elementary school 4 miles away.

"You move to Knightsville to go to Knightsville Elementary," said Kenny Billings, a resident of Bradford Chase. Like many parents in the subdivision, he made a last-ditch appeal to the school board in mid-December after finding out his child was suddenly slated to attend the brand-new Alston-Bailey Elementary on U.S. Highway 78 in the fall of 2016.

But despite hearing impassioned pleas from several Bradford Chase homeowners and receiving a petition with more than 100 signatures at its Dec. 14 meeting, the school board stayed its course. New Billings' 9-year-old daughter and 55 other children from Bradford Chase will have to say goodbye to friends at Knightsville El-



For an interactive map showing at what capacity Lowcountry schools are currently operating, go to [postandcourier.com/overcrowding](http://postandcourier.com/overcrowding).

ementary when they finish the current school year.

The district unveiled its first draft of new elementary school attendance lines in mid-October. District leaders held six parent input meetings around the county as they sought to divvy up children from high-performing but woefully overcrowded schools like Knightsville Elementary to attend three brand-new schools in 2016.

Billings, like many Bradford Chase residents, saw that his neighborhood wasn't being reworked under the initial plan, so he didn't attend any of the public input meetings. He thought his

Please see **LINE5**, Page A4



A crowd gathers outside Abraham Lincoln High School to hear presidential hopeful Hillary Clinton speak Sunday in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

## Iowa's rush to the fringes sending strong message

BY TRIP GABRIEL  
New York Times

DES MOINES, IOWA — Iowa, widely derided for being unlike the rest of the United States, was supposed to be irrelevant this year as the presidential race became nationalized — thanks to widely viewed televised debates and the rise of social media.

But as the Iowa caucuses loom Monday — the first votes after 1,500 candidate rallies, 60,000 TV ads and a nail-biting tightening of the polls here — the state's voters are poised to play their most significant role ever in both parties' nominating contests. And their embrace of candidates on

Please see **FRINGES**, Page A5

## Inside SPORTS

No. 2 Gamecocks go to 21-0 with win over Texas A&M, C1

## SPORTS

The Citadel recruiting through controversy again, C1

## LOCAL

Drug dealers find anonymity shipping via USPS, A3



Mostly sunny. High 73, low 52. Complete 5-day forecast, B8

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Business ..... D1  
Classifieds ..... C6  
Comics ..... B6,7  
Crossword ..... B6, C10  
Editorial ..... A10  
Movies ..... B5  
Obituaries ..... B2  
Some ..... B1  
Sports ..... C1  
Sudoku ..... B7  
Television ..... B4

Charleston Deals today

Footlight Players \$16 for two tickets to Dorothy in Wonderland (valued at \$30). See A2





Gamecocks' ace recruiters 'love going the extra mile.' **1B**

**WOMEN'S BASKETBALL**

USC holds off Texas A&M, takes control in SEC. **1B**



MONDAY FEBRUARY 1 2016

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# The State

## FIRST ELECTION 2016: IOWA CAUCUSES VOTES CAST



BY ANDY SHAIN AND JAMIE SELF ashain@thestate.com, jsself@thestate.com

Iowa is where voters will learn if anyone can stop front-runner Donald Trump from running the table in early GOP voting. The billionaire New York developer is opening up a lead over U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas in what is February's tightest race. On the Democratic side, U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont hopes to pull off an upset against front-runner Hillary Clinton. The state is a must-win for Sanders, looking to prove his electability to voters in the South, where Clinton dominates in polls.

**WHAT THE POLLS SAY**

Trump has led Cruz by 7-8 percentage points in recent polls. Courting Iowa's evangelical voters, Cruz led many polls in December. Then, Trump started questioning Cruz's Canadian birth and failure to disclose Wall Street loans, used to pay for his Senate run. U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida is lurking in third in Iowa, slowly gaining on Cruz.

Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders are in a tight race in Iowa, having swapped the lead in polls, sometimes within the margin of error. In an average of polls, Clinton still has a slight edge - 47 percent to 44 percent. That's a big change from December, when some polls had Sanders trailing by double digits. The shift could mean Sanders' efforts to tie Clinton to Wall Street and the establishment are paying off.

**WHO MUST WIN?**

Cruz. The senator has risen to second in New Hampshire, passing establishment candidates who normally perform well in that state. Still, Cruz trails Trump by 19 percentage points in the Granite State. And in South Carolina, Cruz trails Trump by 16 percentage points. Iowa is Cruz's best hope to avoid a Trump sweep of the early states. A win should give the senator a surge of support in South Carolina and nine other states, where evangelicals make up the majority of GOP voters, that vote before March 15.

Sanders. The self-described democratic socialist faces almost certain losses in the South. A win in Iowa, followed by New Hampshire, where Sanders is the favorite, could sway voters in South Carolina, where Clinton has a commanding lead. A loss in Iowa will spell trouble for Sanders by undercutting his claim that he is electable.

**WHAT'S KEY**

For Cruz, hoping as many evangelical voters show up at the caucuses as possible. Evangelicals account for 60 percent of Iowa voters, and Cruz holds a slight lead over Trump among those very religious voters. If evangelicals don't come out, Trump looks like the winner. Trump also could win if a rush of new voters, attracted to his campaign, overwhelms the caucuses.

Turnout and Martin O'Malley's supporters. Sanders is counting on first-time caucus-goers, who favored the Vermont independent over Clinton by 51-41 in a recent poll, to turn out in his favor. Democratic caucus-goers loyal to O'Malley, the former Maryland governor who has not escaped single digits in the polls, also could help Clinton or Sanders to victory. Candidates must have enough support from Democratic caucus-goers to be "viable" to qualify for delegates. If O'Malley does not reach that threshold, his supporters will have a chance to back another candidate.

**KEY DATES**

- FEB. 1**
  - Iowa caucuses, both parties
- FEB. 9**
  - New Hampshire primaries, both parties
- FEB. 11**
  - Democratic presidential debate in Wisconsin
- FEB. 13**
  - Republican presidential candidates' debate in Greenville
- FEB. 20**
  - South Carolina Republican primary
  - Nevada Democratic caucuses
- FEB. 23**
  - Nevada Republican caucuses
- FEB. 27**
  - South Carolina Democratic primary

## Flood buyouts a long way off, if they come at all

Federal funds available for hazard mitigation, including property buyouts, after historic storm

No guarantees local governments will use funds for buyouts

Could take up to 18 months or more for funds to be approved

BY AVERY G. WILKS awilks@thestate.com

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**IT'S GOING TO BE A BITTER PILL EITHER WAY YOU LOOK AT IT. BUT I'D SORT OF LIKE TO KNOW NOW.**  
Sam Agee, owner of Gills Creek area

Sam Agee is one of a number of flood-affected property owners stuck in limbo, waiting for a government buyout that might never come.

Months before the historic Oct. 4 storm, Agee bought a two-story house on Kilbourne Road, south of Lake Katherine and just uphill from Gills Creek. Agee lives nearby and hoped to sell the house to his son.

The flooding wiped out those plans, and now the house is gutted and boarded up as Agee weighs whether to go ahead with costly repairs or keep waiting on a government buyout he isn't sure will come.

"It's going to be a bitter pill either way you look at it," Agee said, "but I'd sort of like to know now."

The wait for Agee and other residents affected by the flooding will take a while longer as local governments look to secure federal hazard mitigation funds made possible by the presidential disaster declaration.

It could be 18 months or more before those funds are approved, said Derrek Becker, a spokesman for the S.C. Emergency Management Division.

Then, there are no guarantees local governments will use the money to buy out properties in flood-prone areas and convert them into green space.

The federal money, awarded after a competitive appli-

cation process, can pay for a variety of efforts, including strengthening public buildings, widening culverts in waterways or buying out property. It is unclear how many federal dollars will be available for South Carolina, but the Federal Emergency Management Agency has agreed to provide an amount equal to 25 percent of the disaster's total government cost, Becker said.

FEMA money can be used to pay for 75 percent of an individual project's cost. Communities would have to come up with the other 25 percent.

**'THEY SHOULD NOT WAIT'**

Disaster officials say what to do is up to local governments.

After a 2010 flood that caused \$2 billion in damage, Nashville banned new commercial and residential development in flood-prone areas, placed limits on property owners who wanted to rebuild in floodways and bought more than 200 homes

SEE FLOOD, 6A



A house Sam Agee purchased shortly before the flood in October sits gutted and empty.



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DISABILITIES  
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See Page 3A for details.

# Morning News

MONDAY FEBRUARY 1, 2016

TODAY'S  
WEATHER

Partly sunny and mild.  
High 74, low 50.  
DETAILS 2A

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The Voice of the Pee Dee

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## FACES OF FEBRUARY

A series honoring young African-Americans in the Pee Dee

# Thomasena Thomas



Thomasena Thomas bakes cupcakes to sell at South Florence High School. Thomas has owned her specialty cupcake company, Fairy Cakes, for three years.

## Baker enjoys the sweet smell of success

BY MEGAN MAY  
Morning News  
mmay@florencenews.com

### EFFINGHAM

Thomasena Thomas' house smells delicious. The aroma of sugar and butter greets you at the front door.

It's Thursday night and Thomasena, 17, is in the middle of her weekly routine of baking about 300 cupcakes to sell Friday at South Florence High School.

For three years, Thomasena has owned Fairy Cakes, a specialty cupcake company. What began as a hobby with her older sister has turned into a serious career path.

Thomasena began her company during her first year of culinary arts at the Florence Career Center. Since then her market has grown from just baking for family and friends to include her high school, specialty orders and events around town. She

*"The students are excited, and the teachers are excited, and it showed me that this is a lot bigger than just cupcakes."*

Thomasena Thomas

17-year-old baker and entrepreneur

recently hired fellow students as sales reps to help with orders.

"One of my favorite (events) was Comic Con of Florence," she said. "We did superhero- and villain-inspired cupcakes."

Last spring, Thomasena was selected out of thousands of teenagers to participate in the Disney Dreamers Academy. The program annually invites 100 teenagers to a four-day mentoring camp teaching them how to succeed in school and after graduation.

Thomasena said the program made her more serious about her company. She even left the cheerleading team to focus more on Fairy Cakes.

Fairy Cakes has been a hit at South Florence High School.

"I'll walk into school and people are like, 'What flavors are you doing Friday? What kind of cupcake can I get?'" Thomasena said. "That makes me really happy, because it shows me that it's actually helped improve the school. The students are excited, and the teachers are excited, and it showed me that this is a lot bigger than just cupcakes."

Thomasena hopes to attend Francis Marion University next year. She wants to create a partnership between Fairy Cakes and the university, as well as various high schools throughout Florence.

## Madie Robinson Human rights advocate and community servant

BY SHAMIRA MCCRAY  
Morning News  
smccray@florencenews.com

FLORENCE — Madie Robinson is making her mark in Florence, whether it is by advocating for civil rights or seeing that Pee Dee women and babies receive the health care they deserve.

Robinson is president of the Florence branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and executive director of Pee Dee Healthy Start Inc.

Pee Dee Healthy Start was started in 1991 as a federally funded, five-year demonstration program administered by the United Way of South Carolina. There were 15 other sites across the nation that were part of the same program. The goal was to reduce infant mortality by 50 percent.



Each Monday, the Morning News features a good news story on a person, place or organization in the Pee Dee. If you have a suggestion for someone or something to profile, send it to news@scnw.com.

See ROBINSON, Page 4A



Madie Robinson is executive director of Pee Dee Healthy Start Inc. and president of the Florence branch of the NAACP.

## Mother-daughter duo takes on the competition

Cherrie and  
Ravyn Dean,  
a mother-



BY DEBORAH SWEARINGEN  
Morning News  
dswearingen@florencenews.com

FLORENCE'S  
BIGGEST

where you're coming from is a lot more comforting," she said.

Cherrie, who works at Briggs El-

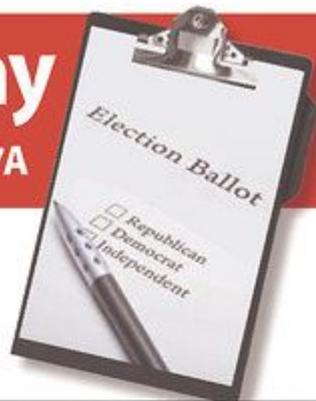


# Iowa caucuses are today

Voter turnout is the name of the game for candidates • 7A

## Aiken Standard

YOUR LOCAL NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1867



MONDAY, February 1, 2016

AIKENSTANDARD.COM

Vol. 150, No. 32 Aiken, S.C. ★★ 75¢

### INSIDE TODAY



Ear candling remains a controversial practice

Living on the Go, 1C



Interim planning director is leaving position

Local News, 2A



Crepe's Cafe now open in downtown Aiken

Local News, 3A



Hospice asks for Baskets of Love® donations

Local News, 3A

### AREA DEATHS

Linda Dill Smith, Aiken  
Sabra Toole McClain Sanders, New Ellenton  
Vera Saln Guzman, Williston  
Deaths and Funerals, 6A



STAFF PHOTO BY DEDE BILES

Jennifer Pixley, third from the right, cuts the ribbon during the dedication ceremony for her house, which was the 100th home built by Aiken County Habitat for Humanity, in the Warren Ridge subdivision in Warrenville on Sunday. Looking on are Dr. Aaron L. Washington II, chairman of Habitat's board of directors, far left, and Habitat Executive Director Richard Church, far right. Also pictured are Pixley's children, Arthur, second from left, Adriyanna, Aliza and Josiah.

## Habitat dedicates 100th home built

BY DEDE BILES  
dbiles@aikenstandard.com

WARRENVILLE — Jennifer Pixley called her new three-bedroom home "a blessing from God" during a dedication ceremony Sunday afternoon in the Warren Ridge subdivision.

The gray house with white shutters is the 100th residence built by Aiken County Habitat for Humanity for a family in need since the organization's founding in 1988.

Pixley and her four children — Arthur, Adriyanna, Aliza and Josiah — moved into the house late last year and celebrated Christmas there.

"It's been real good," said Pixley, who works as a cook at HarborChase of Aiken and the Hilton Garden Inn. "The neighborhood is nice and quiet, and we are enjoying our home. Christmas was great. The best thing was seeing my children's smiling faces and knowing they were happy."

Pixley helped volunteers build her house, and she also plans to work on the home that will be constructed next door to hers this year by Habitat's Women Build program.

"Ashley Noel, who will own that house, helped from the start with mine," Pixley said. "I feel like that if she



STAFF PHOTO BY DEDE BILES

Jennifer Pixley, right, holding one of her sons, Josiah, talks to Demetria Glover before the dedication ceremony for Pixley's house, which was the 100th home built by Aiken County Habitat for Humanity, in the Warren Ridge subdivision in Warrenville on Sunday.

helped with mine, I should give her a hand."

Pixley and her children received a variety of gifts, including Bibles, a bookcase, birdhouses and a handmade

Please see HOME, Page 10A

## Facility wants to expand, update exhibit

BY DEDE BILES  
dbiles@aikenstandard.com

In the Aiken Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame and Museum, there is an exhibit that focuses on the contributions made by members of the local African-American community to the equine industry.

Posters hang on several walls, but

There are people out there who haven't been recognized, and I want to make sure that they are.

the facility's coordinator, Lisa Hall, isn't satisfied with what's there.

"I think there are more stories to be told," she said.

Hall recently sent out a news release that asked the public for assistance in updating and expanding the exhibit.

Lisa Hall, coordinator of the Racing Hall of Fame and Museum

"I would like to talk to anyone who worked at the Aiken Training Track or

at any of the thoroughbred stables and farms around here, and I would like to talk to their families," Hall said.

In addition, Hall wants to borrow photographs, letters and newspaper articles so they can be copied and used in the exhibit. She also is interested in hearing stories that have been passed down from generation to generation.

"There are people out there who haven't been recognized, and I want to make sure that they are."

Please see EXHIBIT, Page 10A

## Aiken packaging business featured on eBay



STAFF PHOTO BY DEDE BILES

BY DERREK ASBERRY  
dasherry@aikenstandard.com

Before the two warehouses — one in Aiken on University Parkway and another in California — and before the website that has helped generate 108,000 shipments a year, all Cori O'Steen had was eBay and a dream.

The owner of UpakNShip, Cori started her business in 2003 after searching for a simple way to make extra money as a stay-at-home mom. Upak is a full-service packaging business.

The business has humble beginnings with sales initially consisting of hand-me-down clothing her

other necessities a person may use to ship items.

Over time, Cori has developed a career which came with the need to expand. With the help of eBay, and her husband Beau, who is an Aiken native, Cori was able to spread the word and eventually spread her wings to the East Coast.

The O'Steens moved from California to Aiken in 2013 following the 2008 startup of www.upaknship.com and the 2011 opening of the Aiken warehouse.

In December, eBay filmed a tour of the O'Steens surroundings including a visit to downtown Aiken, the warehouse on University Park-



See what coaches have to say about Josh Norman  
Sports, 1B

# INDEX-JOURNAL

VOL. 67, NO. 314

 indexjournal.com

2 SECTIONS, 18 PAGES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2016

DAILY 75¢, SUNDAY \$1.50

## Fire stations in need of volunteers



By **DAMIAN DOMINGUEZ**  
ddominguez@indexjournal.com

Fire officials are looking for new recruits as the number of volunteer firefighters in Greenwood County has dwindled through the years.

"Our membership numbers have been declining across the nation," county fire coordinator Steve Holmes said. "Back in the seventies and eighties, when I joined the service, we had about 400 volunteer firefighters. Now that's down to about 200."

Mike Waters, fire chief at Promised Land Station 20, said in order to better serve the community, firefighters are needed to help answer calls

quicker. Many of the volunteers at stations across the county have full-time jobs, he said, so having a broader staff allows fire departments to answer more calls, rather than having other departments drive out to assist.

"We struggle with getting volunteers everywhere," he said. "But being a volunteer fireman isn't just about running into a fire. There's a place for everyone."

Volunteers can join a fire department and work on cleaning the station and washing trucks, handling administrative duties or operating the truck while other volunteers fight a fire, Holmes said.

One challenge to recruitment, he said, is the increased training requirement from previous decades.

Volunteers go through several hundred hours of training and classes, he said, which can be too much of a time constraint to some people.

But volunteers dedicate the time and effort, so they can take on the responsibility of keeping their community safer, Waters said.

"The reason most people do it is to give back to their community," he said. "That's why I do it."

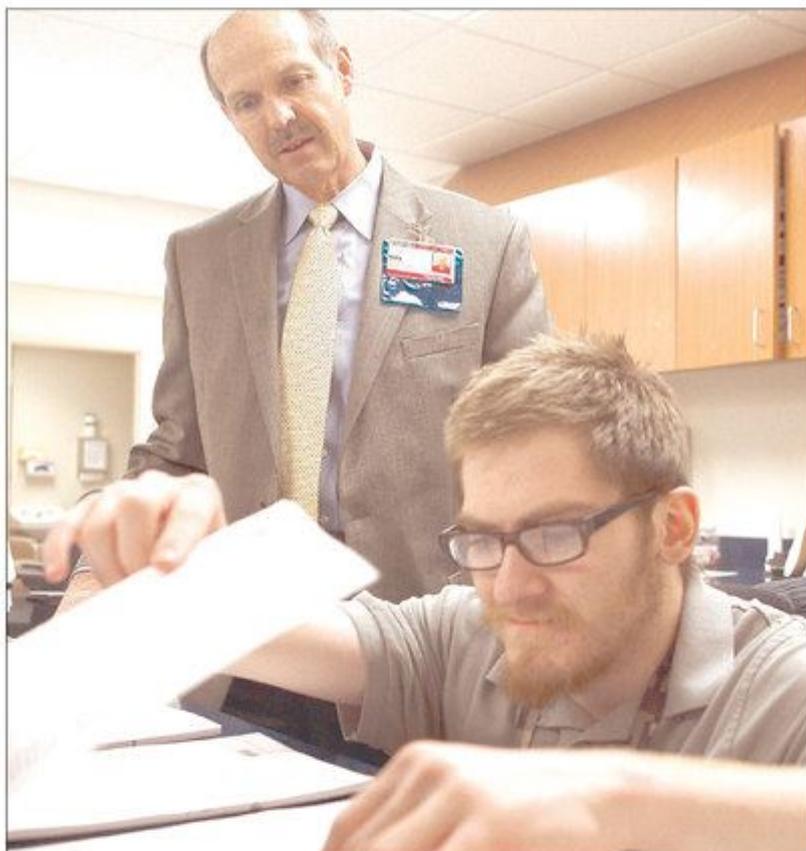
Holmes said volunteering also provides training and experience, alongside a group of coworkers who form their own bonds.

"Especially on the volunteer side of things, the people you work with become your second family," he said.

See **STATIONS**, page 4A

DAMIAN DOMINGUEZ | INDEX-JOURNAL  
Mike Waters, assistant fire chief at Callison fire station and chief of the Promised Land station, said both are in need of volunteers. A better-staffed fire station can keep the community safer by responding more quickly and more often to fires, he said.

## PREPARING FOR LIFE



JOSHUA S. KELLY | INDEX-JOURNAL

Greenwood County School District 50 transitional teacher for special education Billy Ford, left, watches Emerald senior Travis Rtenour work at Self Memorial Thursday afternoon.

### Special education teacher works to get students employment after school

By **ARIEL GILREATH**  
agilreath@indexjournal.com

Tucked in the back of Greenwood High School is Billy Ford's small classroom of about 10 desks, arranged in the center of the room with job tips facing them from the walls and a list of bullet points on how to ace an interview.

Ford is a transitional teacher for special education in Greenwood County School District 50 and runs the Work Readiness Preparation Program for Greenwood and Emerald High School's special needs students.

Before special education, Ford was a physical education teacher for the district for one year, and before that, he worked as an insurance salesman.

Ford has been the head of the Work Readiness Preparation Program for six years with the district after working as a special education teacher for 16 years.

The program he runs allows students with special needs to work with businesses in town for one hour each day and gain



**BILLY FORD**  
District 50

work experience for their portfolios.

"We have seven to eight work experiences a year per student," Ford said. "Each year they can do different things, for example, if a student spends two years with me, they can have anywhere from 12-16 work experiences."

Ford said each work experience lasts about four weeks, or until the student is at 80 percent proficiency in the job, and the student is supervised by someone at the business as well as Ford and his job coaches, who check on the students.

"My focus is to make transition a viable thing for students that are in school going into the workplace," Ford said.

Ford said he tries to place students in jobs based on their interests and where they want to be.

See **EDUCATION**, page 4A

### Connor and Sned Houses awarded preservation honor





# The Beaufort Gazette

MONDAY, February 1, 2016

beaufortgazette.com

Established in 1897 75 cents

IN BLUFFTON



Lindsay Persoon, of Bluffton, sets up to bowl during the 2nd annual Osprey Village Pro-Bowl Open on Sunday night at Station 300 in Bluffton.

DELAYNA EARLEY • Staff photos

2016 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN: PRIMARIES

## Turnout is key in Iowa caucuses

By KEN THOMAS and SCOTT BAUER

The Associated Press

WEST DES MOINES, Iowa — In a final frenzy to inspire supporters to turn out for today's Iowa caucuses, the presidential contenders scrambled to close the deal with the first voters to have a say in the 2016 race for the White House.

The result Sunday was a blur of sometimes conflicting messages. Even as the candidates begged backers to caucus, many hopefuls also tried to lower expectations and look ahead to the New Hampshire primary on Feb. 9 and later contests.

Republican Donald Trump, who has a slight edge over Ted Cruz in Iowa, predicted that "many" senators "soon" would endorse him rather than their colleague. Trump didn't name any such senators, and none immediately emerged.

Democratic Hillary Clinton, in a tight race with Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, suggested that political point-scoring helped explain the hubbub over the State Department's announcement Friday that it was withholding some emails on the home server she used while secretary of state.

The Sanders campaign, meanwhile, sought to claim financial momentum, saying it has raised \$20 million in January, suggesting he will continue to match Clinton's resources.

One development — the weather — was beyond the candidates' control. A snowfall forecast to start tonight appeared more likely to hinder the hopefuls in their rush out of Iowa than the voters. Republican John Kasich already has decamped to New Hampshire.

Iowa offers only a small contingent of the delegates who will determine the nominees, but the game of expectations counts for far more than the electoral math in the state. Campaigns worked aggressively to set those expectations in their favor (read: lower them) for Iowa, New Hampshire and beyond.

Meantime, on the final full day before the caucus, a pastor at a church outside Des Moines urged politicians to treat their opponents

# ROLLING OF FREEDOM

Pro-Bowl Open benefits planned community for adults with disabilities

By REBECCA LURYE  
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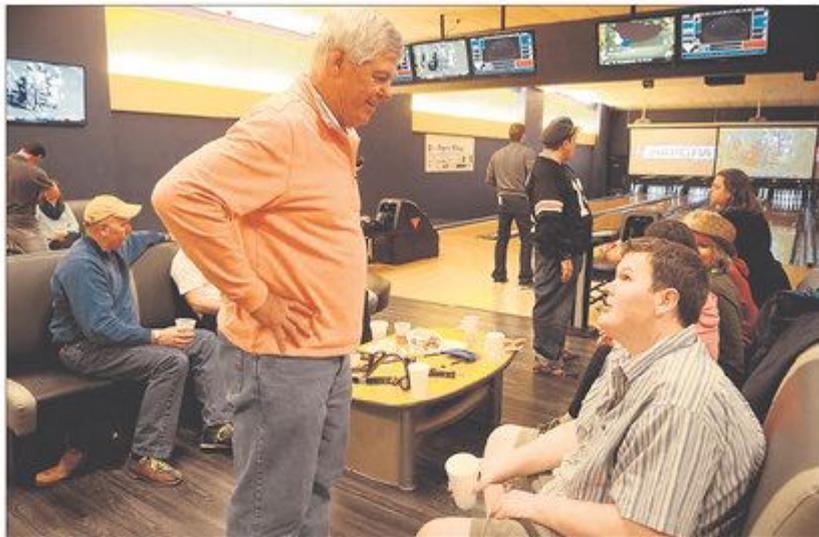
Lindsay Persoon picked through bowling balls while she waited for a lane to clear at Bluffton's Station 300, lifting each contender and swinging her arm slowly to test her grip.

"I need something smaller," Persoon, 26, said as she discarded a dark purple ball. "I have little hands."

As a two-time bowling competitor in the Special Olympics, Persoon, who has Down syndrome, is serious about the sport.

However, most people filling Station 300 on Sunday night were just having fun. They ate, bowled, bid on more than 80 auction items and watched the Pro-Bowl Open to raise money for Osprey Village Inc., a nonprofit that plans to create a community where adults with and without developmental disabilities can live together.

Sponsors filled all 24 lanes, decked in their company T-shirts, including a group of nine employees



Former NFL player Ken Anderson, left, talks with Taylor Burch, right, during the 2nd annual Osprey Village Pro-Bowl Open.

each frame, part-owner Heidi Col-

lins said the family business can-

Open fundraiser was presented by

Brian Symmes

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