

From: Symmes, Brian <BrianSymmes@gov.sc.gov>
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S.C. General Assembly News:

The State: SC Supreme Court race: Lawmakers fishing for anti-Abbeville sentiment?

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article57431843.html>

John Monk

One of the three candidates in the race for the open seat on the S.C. Supreme Court has signaled he might not agree with the high court's historic 2014 ruling in the state's decades-old school funding lawsuit. And that has made him appealing to some GOP lawmakers who believe the high court over-reached in that case.

Anderson Independent: Lack of consensus is roadblock for S.C. highway funding

<http://www.independentmail.com/news/lack-of-consensus-is-roadblock-for-sc-highway-funding-2a816a00-2a76-312c-e053-0100007f7ffb-367050711.html>

Kirk Brown

Anderson County legislators and the candidates running for two state Senate seats have an array of differing views about how South Carolina should come up with the money needed to repair its crumbling roads. Some lawmakers want to use most of the state's \$1.3 billion surplus on highway projects. Several would be willing to consider an increase in the state's 16-cent per gallon gas tax that would be partially offset by a reduction in income taxes.

Post and Courier: National Muslim advocacy group asks General Assembly to abandon Sharia law bill

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160129/PC1603/160129301>

Maya T. Prabhu

A national group that lobbies for Muslim civil liberties asked the S.C. Legislature on Friday to drop a bill that would ban Sharia law from being used as a defense in state courts, saying it is unconstitutional. Council on American-Islamic Relations attorney William Burgess said the bill violated the Constitution's Establishment Clause on religion because it is designed to attack Muslim religious principles.

Index-Journal: Senior senate seats favor Greenwood politically

<http://indexjournal.com/news/Senior-senate-seats-favor-Greenwood-politically>

Colin Riddle

Consistency can prove fruitful in many cases, despite many calls locally and nationally to rid politics of the establishment. At home, seniority in the Statehouse is more than a badge of honor, it's a nod to reliability, trust and forever-increasing responsibility in many cases.

S.C. Political News:

The State: Sanders bids to win over SC black Democrats

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article57422218.html>

Jamie Self

The only political sign visible Wednesday along the street where a Bernie Sanders volunteer was knocking on doors was a blazing red one, supporting Republican presidential hopeful Ted Cruz. But within a few minutes, Bob Marshall of Massachusetts met Vivian Weeks, an avid Sanders supporter who said she "surely would" vote for the U.S. senator from Vermont.

Aiken Standard: K.T. Ruthven announces candidacy for S.C. House District 81 seat

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20160129/AIK0101/160129336>

Derrek Asberry

Aiken GOP President K.T. Ruthven said he is running for the House District 81 seat because that district

has been the weakest link in the Aiken County Legislative Delegation and the constituents are hurting as a result. Ruthven announced Friday afternoon on the corner of Laurens Street and Hayne Avenue that he is looking to replace S.C. Rep. Don Wells, R-Aiken, who announced Thursday that he would not seek re-election.

Opinion / Editorial Roundup:

Post and Courier: A long road-funding way to go

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160130/PC1002/160139939>

Editorial

The traffic on Interstate 26 in North Charleston is heavy, and it will get a lot heavier when the new State Ports Authority terminal opens. So it's encouraging that the S.C. Department of Transportation is trying to move forward with widening the six-mile stretch between Montague Avenue and Heriot Street.

Note: Unfortunately, Gov. Nikki Haley has complicated things by vowing to veto any gas tax hike unless it comes with a decrease in income tax and restructuring of the road funding structure.

Post and Courier: Does 'President Trump' scare him, too?

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160130/PC16/160139954>

Editorial

Be careful what office you run for. You might win it. That's a variation on the Chinese proverb, "Be careful what you wish for." And this is a plausible political premise: A presumably very-long-shot candidate who has never held elective office runs for president. A chronic glutton for the spotlight, his true goal is to win massive publicity, not the White House.

Note: Currently our lieutenant governor, McMaster has served as S.C. Republican chairman and state attorney general. He has been a respected, stabilizing force of reason in the state party for decades. He ran for governor in 2010, but after finishing third in the initial primary backed Nikki Haley in her runoff against Gresham Barrett. Now, though, McMaster and Gov. Haley have taken opposing sides in the Trump tangle.

Greenville News: Journalism bill wastes Legislature's time

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/opinion/editorials/2016/01/29/editorial-journalism-bill-wastes-legislatures-time/79471784/>

Editorial

Rep. Mike Pitts of Laurens would require that all journalists register with the Secretary of State, according to a bill he has proposed in the South Carolina General Assembly. We, of course, wholeheartedly reject the idea. Or we would have if Pitts were serious. It turns out Pitts was just making a point about another issue when he proposed the legislation that sounded like a direct assault on the First Amendment.

Greenville News: Gowdy, Mulvaney on Iowa caucuses

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/politics/2016/01/29/gowdy-mulvaney-iowa-caucuses/79525438/>

Editorial

U.S. Reps. Trey Gowdy of Spartanburg and Mick Mulvaney of Indian Land agree on a lot of things. But Friday, they differed on who they think will win the Iowa caucuses. Iowans cast the first votes Monday in the contest to decide the Republican nominee for president. South Carolina Republicans weigh in third, on Feb. 20, following New Hampshire on Feb. 9.

Aiken Standard: Veterans don't deserve dog and pony show in political contest

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20160129/AIK0201/160129433/1018/AIK02>

Editorial

Military veterans in the United States make up less than 1 percent of the population, but in a volatile political season find themselves at nearly 100 percent of the coverage, seeing the issues they face turned into a political dog and pony show.

Post and Courier: Protect S.C. coast: No retreat from 'line in the sand'

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160130/PC1002/160139937>

Elizabeth M. Hagood

South Carolina faces an historic opportunity this legislative session, with a vote on the floor likely in the coming weeks. As our state has been a past leader in coastal management policy, we have a chance to refine beachfront regulations that protect both our treasured shoreline and S.C. taxpayers.

South Carolina News:

Greenville News: Chinese exploring investment in Upstate automotive manufacturing

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/money/2016/01/29/chinese-exploring-investment-upstate-automotive-manufacturing/79517554/>

Amanda Coyne

A delegation from the Carolinas Chinese Chamber of Commerce, including the chamber president, visited BMW, Clemson University's ICAR and electroplating company Roy Metal Fabrication on Friday. It was a step toward Chinese investment in the Upstate's growing automotive industry, said Richard Yang, the chamber's president.

Post and Courier: S.C. schools chart new course as No Child Left Behind era ends

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160130/PC16/160129735>

Paul Bowers

In the summer of 2012, North Charleston High Principal Bob Grimm had to drive to Columbia and defend his school against a possible state takeover. With just a year on the job, he said his hearing before the state Department of Education was "a little unnerving" — but ultimately helpful.

Greenville News: State has paid \$30 million for DOT claims in 6 years

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/politics/2016/01/29/state-has-paid-30-million-dot-claims-6-years/79507404/>

Tim Smith

While senators debate how best to pay for needed road repairs, the State Insurance Reserve Fund is paying millions of dollars each year in claims for damage caused by bad roads. In fact, over a six year period, the Insurance Reserve Fund, which acts as the insurance carrier for state and other government agencies, paid more than \$30 million to resolve claims against the state Department of Transportation, mostly over alleged road defects.

Greenville News: State confirms three SC residents tested for Zika virus

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/2016/01/29/state-confirms-three-sc-residents-tested-zika-virus/79517620/>

Liv Osby

Three people in South Carolina are being tested for the Zika virus but no cases of the disease have been confirmed yet, state health officials said Friday. The chances of getting Zika virus here are minuscule, Dr. Teresa Foo of the state Department of Health and Environmental Control told The Greenville News.

Post and Courier: Stand-Up Sunday arms faithful to support background check bills

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160130/PC12/160139966>

Jennifer Berry Hawes

Thirty years have passed, but the innocence remains lost. The Rev. Jeremy Rutledge was 14 when his father woke him one morning, newspaper in hand, a story peeking from above the fold about the teen's close friend. The boy's father had just killed his brother and then himself.

Post and Courier: Folly lighthouse preserve to gain \$1 fee as laser counter tracks inlet popularity

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20160129/PC16/160129306>

Prentiss Findlay

Starting this spring, the Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission will ask people who visit the Lighthouse Inlet Heritage Preserve to pay a buck. It's not much, but it could add up. In the past four months, more than 20,000 people have made the half-mile trek to the inlet at the northeast end of the island, the PRC said.

Local News:

The State: Richland leaders lay out intermediate, long-term flood recovery goals at retreat

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article57430453.html#storylink=cpy>

Sarah Ellis

Richland County is looking at a seven-year flood recovery process before the community can consider itself fully recuperated from October's historic deluge, disaster recovery personnel told County Council on Thursday. Flood recovery was a key discussion at council's annual planning retreat, held Thursday and

Friday in downtown Charleston.

Sun News: Extreme flooding event unlikely to greatly affect shad run
<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/sports/outdoors/article57348828.html>

Gregg Holshouser

The annual spawning run of shad up rivers along the Southeast coast has commenced, and there is one potential complication in the equation in South Carolina's rivers. The question is will the current long stretch of high water on the rivers that started nearly four months ago with the extreme flooding event of Oct. 1-5, 2015 have any effect on the shad run in South Carolina's rivers?

Brian Symmes

Cell: 803-673-9437

Office: 803-734-0304