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Subject: Clips – Saturday, December 26, 2015

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

Post and Courier: Gas tax debate returns as roads remain a top priority in 2016

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20151225/PC1603/151229727>

Gavin Jackson

The old saying money can't buy happiness is especially true when it comes to fixing South Carolina's aging and crumbling roads and bridges. Lawmakers will have an additional \$1.2 billion in new revenue and unspent cash available when they return in January for the second round of a two-year legislative session.

Note: A roads bill was derailed last session by a feud that erupted between Haley and the new leader of the Senate, Hugh Leatherman, R-Florence.

Note: Haley unveiled her promised transportation plan in her State of the State address, threatening to veto any hike in the gas tax that wasn't offset by a hefty cut in the state's income tax. That conflicted with proposals lawmakers had worked out, raising the gas tax, but leaving the income tax unchanged.

Note: With neither side backing down, Haley called out lawmakers in their hometowns, causing some to speculate that Leatherman bottled up ethics reform — one of Haley's priorities — in retaliation for her opposition to lawmakers' roads bills.

Note: Haley's spokeswoman, Chaney Adams, said the governor is standing by her request for a 2 percent decrease in the state income tax if the gas tax is raised. "The governor has been clear about her plan to invest in roads and bridges, and that hasn't changed," Adams said.

Post and Courier: S.C. education overhaul remains contentious a year after high court's ruling

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20151224/PC1603/151229746>

Cynthia Roldan

The high court's decision in the 22-year Abbeville lawsuit found that students in mostly minority, impoverished rural school districts had not been receiving a minimally adequate education as guaranteed by the state constitution and ordered the Legislature to come up with a plan to rectify that.

Note: Soon after the court issued its split 3-2 decision in November 2014, Gov. Nikki Haley and House and Senate leaders challenged it, questioning whether the justices even had to order the Legislature to take action and asking that the ruling be reconsidered.

Note: Haley and legislative leaders argued that the court had not given the state credit for recent steps to improve education or been specific about what it expected lawmakers to do.

S.C. General Assembly News:

Seneca Journal: Martin among MADD Legislators of the Year

<https://upstatetoday.com/2015/12/martin-among-madd-legislators-of-the-year/>

Greg Oliver

State Sen. Larry Martin of Pickens is among 70 lawmakers across the country who have been recognized by Mothers Against Drunk Driving for their efforts in authoring legislation designed to crack down on drunk driving. Martin was recognized for authoring three separate Senate bills related to alcohol server training, improving field sobriety test requirements and improving the interlock law.

Opinion / Editorial Roundup:

Post and Courier: Fix roads before starting I-73

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20151226/PC1002/151229636>

Editorial

Nothing gets state highway commissioners excited like a major new highway project going through their districts. And that was the certainly the case last week with commission vice chairman Mike Wooten,

following approval of building I-73 from I-95 to Myrtle Beach. "We're pretty darned excited about it," Mr. Wooten said.

Coastal Observer: Pawleys Island: To repair beach, town faces a flood of paperwork

<http://www.coastalobserver.com/articles/2015/122415/1.html>

Charles Swenson

The town of Pawleys Island has appealed to Gov. Nikki Haley for help with permits to repair dunes damaged by Hurricane Joaquin in October. Officials say the emergency permit process lacks coordination between state and federal agencies and has delayed work that will protect beach houses from winter storms.

Florence Morning News: Thumbs up to the candidates who are appearing in Florence

http://www.scnow.com/opinion/editorials/article_2c7a9606-ab5c-11e5-a7fd-7b1aed627ce1.html

Editorial

Thumbs up to Carly Fiorina for making not one but two appearances Tuesday in Florence. She appeared first at Wholly Smokin' Downtown before giving the keynote address at Florence County Progress Inc.'s annual luncheon held at the Florence County Civic Center. Like her or loathe her, it was good to see a 2016 presidential candidate take the time to connect with potential voters in the Pee Dee.

Note: Thumbs down to our South Carolina Legislature and Gov. Nikki Haley if they don't give the people what they want next year. What do they want? An increase in the state's gas tax – that is, if the money is to be used for repairing roads and transportation infrastructure.

Greenville News: Hispanics could give support to Rubio

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/opinion/contributors/2015/12/26/hispanics-could-give-support-rubio/77580548/>

Editorial

It's no secret Republicans have had a tough time persuading Hispanic-American voters. In 40 years, George W. Bush has fared the best, winning 44 percent in 2004. Mitt Romney, their latest offering, only won an abysmal 27 percent. Who would have thought "self-deportation" wouldn't sell?

South Carolina News:

Associated Press: SC Chief Justice Jean Toal faces mandatory retirement

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=56ZVXUt0

Jeffrey Collins

At the end of this month, Toal finishes a full-time legal career that started months before her native state passed a law allowing women to serve on juries. Toal has gone from being the 11th woman with an active law license in South Carolina in 1968 to swearing in a hundred or more woman lawyers after the bar exam every year.

Associated Press: Records or near records for sea turtles in SC in '15

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=xzmRh7k3

Records were set or approached during 2015 as volunteers worked to protect sea turtles along the South Carolina coast. The Post and Courier of Charleston reports (<http://bit.ly/1kjlIla>) a record 30 sick or injured turtles from South Carolina waters were treated at the Sea Turtle Hospital at the South Carolina Aquarium.

The State: Edwards led way to making S.C. a 'red state'

<http://www.thestate.com/news/special-reports/state-125/article51623060.html>

Cassie Cope

In 1974, James Edwards became the first Republican elected to governor of South Carolina since Reconstruction. Edwards first secured the GOP nomination in a primary win against retired Army Gen. William Westmoreland, the commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam from 1964-68.

Aiken Standard: South Carolina sets record high temperatures on Christmas holiday

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20151225/AIK0101/151229600/south-carolina-sets-record-high-temperatures-on-christmas-holiday>

Maayan Schechter

The unusually warm December days across parts of the United States were partly due to a weather pattern linked to El Niño – the warming of surface waters in the Pacific Ocean near the equator – turning winter virtually upside-down across parts of the country, according to The Associated Press.

Local News:

Associated Press: Emergency officials warn Lake Murray flood gates may open

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

Richland County emergency officials say the flood gates may have to be opened at Lake Murray because of heavy rains upstream the past few days. The county Emergency Services Department sent out a message warning residents downstream of the possibility Thursday morning. The gates were opened in October during the heavy rains, flooding hundreds of homes.

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