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The Post and Courier

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Monday, October 26, 2015

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Charleston, S.C. \$1.00

7 face challengers in N. Charleston

Incumbents, 'Dream Team' rivals focus on jobs, economy, leadership

BY BRENDA RINDGE
brindge@postandcourier.com

In addition to the mayor's job, all 10 North Charleston council seats are up for election this year.

While the mayor's race has garnered the lion's share of attention, seven incumbent City Council members also are facing challenges.

Many of the candidates have attended forums, where topics

mirrored the mayor's race: infrastructure, economic development, education and city leadership.

Eight incumbents hope to be returned for another four years. They include Ed Astle (District 1), Rhonda Jerome (District 2), Todd Olds (District 3), Dorothy Williams (District 4), Sam Hart (District 5), Bob King (District 6) and Michael Brown (District 7). District 8 representative Ron Brinson does not have

* Palmetto Politics

For more information on the Nov. 3 elections, go to palmettopolitics.com or download the Palmetto Politics app for iOS or Android.

Inside

A look at the candidates for North Charleston City Council, Page A6

opposition.

In District 3, Councilman Bobby Jameson is not seeking re-election and District 9 representative Dwight Stigler gave up his seat in

September after moving to Florida. Seven newcomers have dubbed themselves the "Dream Team," with shared campaign promises for government transparency, economic and job parity and higher wages.

The group includes Michael A. Brown (District 1), Ray Lloyd Jr. (District 2), Sean Middleton (District 3), Jesse Williams (District 4), Corey Van Hannegeyn (District 5), Marvin Rashad Pendarvis (District 6) and Anjane Davis (District 7).

With no runoff, the winner of each seat will be the candidate who receives the most votes.

More coverage

Read more about candidates in the following contested races:

Saturday
Summerville mayor and Town Council

Sunday
Charleston City Council

Today
North Charleston City Council

Tuesday
Mount Pleasant Town Council

Sunday, Nov. 1
Charleston, North Chas. mayoral races

The great oil debate

Experts weigh in on hot-button issue of drilling off S.C.'s coast



An employee at Parrot Surf Shop in Mount Pleasant signs a surfboard brought up the East Coast by the Surfrider Foundation to collect signatures from businesses opposing oil drilling offshore. The foundation plans to present the board to Obama administration officials.

BY BO PETERSEN
bpetersen@postandcourier.com

A former oil rig crew chief opposes testing and drilling for oil offshore. A geology professor supports it. They are two of the more startling voices in a debate that has become a political log.

Opponents and supporters each argue facts as they see them in the blitzes and counter-blitzes of information

and disinformation that have come to dominate the issue. As the Obama administration nears a final ruling, the "yes" or "no" remains uncertain enough that neither side really knows what the recent decision to stop drilling in the Arctic has for South Carolina.

"It's a tough one to call," said James Knapp, a University of South Carolina ocean science professor who favors testing for oil and natural gas offshore.

Shell oil company pulling out of the region after investing \$7 billion in testing and sampling played into the decision, he said. The stoppage "shows activism works," said Samantha Siegel, of environmental advocate Oceana. "I am somewhat worried about it putting more pressure on the administration to drill in the Atlantic."

Please see OIL, Page A8

pc Poll

Do you support drilling for gas and/or oil off the coast of South Carolina? Go to postandcourier.com/polls to vote.

Stabbing victim's infant girl dies

Miracle delivered after Oct. 10 attack

BY MELISSA BOUGHTON
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The 14-day-old baby girl who was born after her mother was fatally stabbed in North Charleston earlier this month died Saturday. Miracle Frasier died just after 7:55 p.m. Saturday at Medical University Hospital, according to Charleston County Deputy Coroner Bobbi Jo O'Neal.

Her mother, Malakia Frasier, was stabbed multiple times Oct. 10 by her boyfriend, Ricky Short, according to North Charleston police.

She was between five and six months pregnant and kept alive by emergency personnel long enough for hospital staff to deliver Miracle.

Please see BABY, Page A8

GOP poll: Trump is strongest candidate

But pros say Trump, Carson least electable

BY STEVE PEOPLES
and EMILY SWANSON
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republican voters view Donald Trump as their strongest General Election candidate, according to an Associated Press-GfK poll that highlights the sharp contrast between the party's voters and its top professionals regarding the billionaire businessman's ultimate political strength.

Seven in 10 Republican and Republican-leaning registered voters say Trump could win in November 2016 if he is nominated, and that's the most who say so of any candidate. By comparison, 6 in 10 say the same for retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson, who, like Trump, has tapped into the powerful wave of anti-establishment anger defining the early phases of the 2016 contest.

Please see POLL, Page A9

Inside

BUSINESS

Dozens of local businesses go green as part of challenge, D3

SPORTS

Clemson jumps to No. 3 in poll after win over Miami, C5

SPORTS

Panthers stay undefeated after win over Eagles, C1

Celestial Great Pumpkin truly spooky

Jumbo asteroid to pass near Earth, moon on Halloween

BY BO PETERSEN
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The scariest thing to drop in this Halloween won't be in costume. It will fly past the moon.

Asteroid 2015 TB145 will pass Earth on Saturday a mere 300,000 miles away, only a speck farther

than the moon itself and less than a hairbreadth in celestial terms. It will be close enough to be visible by telescope, and will be watched closely by NASA, whose website glibly calls it the Great Pumpkin.

"The gravitational influence of the asteroid is so small it will have no detectable effect on the moon or anything here on Earth, including our planet's tides and tectonic plates," the space agency said in a news release.

Terry Richardson, College of Charleston astronomer, isn't quite

so sanguine. Richardson is a veteran near-earth-object researcher, and he too has been watching this one. The streaking, quarter-mile wide hunk of ice and rock is a little close for comfort.

"It's calculated to be large enough to wipe out California or the East Coast," Richardson said. "This asteroid would be devastating if it struck Earth and it was discovered just 15 days ago, so there was no time to do anything — and I mean anything."

Please see ASTEROID, Page A8



Chance of showers.
High 70, Low 65.
Complete 5-day
forecast, B8

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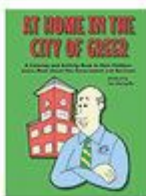
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Charleston Deals today

Hampton Plantation
\$25 for 4 daily passes.
See A2



SPORTS

EARNHARDT
ELIMINATED

METRO

Coloring
book gets
into Greer

The Greenville News

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MONDAY,
OCTOBER 26, 2015
GREENVILLEONLINE.COM

USA TODAY HARSH DESERT ENVIRONMENT SLOWS RUSSIAN ATTACKS PAGE 1B

BART BOATWRIGHT/
STAFF
Tight end
Jordan Leggett
celebrates.58-0 statement propels
Tigers to No. 3 in AP pollMANDRALLIUS ROBINSON
MROBINSON@GREENVILLEONLINE.COM

Clemson's campaign for the College Football Playoff earned its biggest boost Saturday.

Clemson impressed voters with its 58-0 drubbing of Miami. The victory vaulted Clemson three spots to No. 3 in the Associated Press poll, its highest ranking since Oct. 13, 2013. Clemson garnered six first place votes and pushed

past Louisiana State and Texas Christian. Clemson coach Dabo Swinney does not anticipate the national favor will affect the Tigers as they prepare for their fourth consecutive unranked opponent, North Carolina State.

"These guys understand, because they've been so close their whole career here," Swinney said. "These seniors, they know how critical one game is or

See CLEMSON, Page 7A

Parking
changes
on the
horizonOne free hour starting
Nov. 1 aims to make
brief errands easierC. ERIC CONNOR
ECONNOR@GREENVILLEONLINE.COM

Parking in downtown Greenville is poised to change soon — new fees, new perks, new options — and already the city must position itself for even more change and some strategies on how to pay for parking in the years to come.

For now, the biggest change is coming Nov. 1.

On that day, parking for every city parking garage on any day at any time will be free for the first hour.

It's an effort the city says it's making to encourage use of parking garages for people who don't plan to stay downtown long but can't find a spot in the steadily dwindling on-street parking spaces.

After the first hour, the fee in all parking garages will be \$1.50 for the next two hours and another \$1.50 an hour up until a daily limit of \$7.50.

The changes — which also include a rise in special event rates from \$5 to \$6 and a monthly rate increase from \$70 to \$72 — are part of an effort to bring in \$1.3 million more in revenue from garages.

More downtown parking is on the horizon.

Three new garages will open in the coming months — the ONE building garage in December, a garage in May on Broad Street associated with the new Erwin Penland development and the second garage of RiverPlace opening in July.

By the end of November, the city is expected to open a park-and-ride lot in the West End, adding to about 70 new spaces on vacant property on Augusta Street owned by the Greenville Transit Authority next to Fluor Field.

Parking at the new West End lot will be \$1 per hour after the first free hour with a \$7 daily limit.

The new parking system is but a glimpse into how the city will manage parking in the future — and the tough choices it will have to make going forward.

Choices that could include raising parking fees at some point in the future.

Parking represents a challenge in managing downtown's influx of people. The city recently reached a settlement with the Greenville County School District to cede control over a special tax district that long provided funding for downtown improvement projects.

The absence of that funding — derived from what's known as a tax increment finance district, which was already set to expire in a few years — will be replaced going forward by money generated from the city's parking garages, Mayor Knox White said.

TONY KISS
TKISS@GANNETT.COM

Ever wonder just how many calories are in that pint of local craft beer? That sort of information is common on the labels of just about every packaged food and drink product sold in stores, but not on alcohol.

And while you can search online for general nutrition information about liquor or wine or national brands of beer, there's no place to find those details on hometown craft brews.

That will all be changing for many breweries next year, thanks to a new federal regulation requiring calorie counts on menus for any food or drink item sold in chain restaurants, including alcohol. The regulation, on the books since 2014, will go into effect in December 2016.

The regulation is meant to provide useful details for consumers looking to watch their weight and avoid certain foods and drinks. But area breweries say it will be expensive to test all their beers. Some say they may only test a few brews and limit the products they sell to chain restaurants with 20 or more outlets, which fall under the new regulations.

See CALORIES, Page 4A

Calories and carb counts
from CalorieKing.com

» Starbucks latte with whole milk 8 ounces	110 calories 9 carb grams
» Coke 12 ounces	143 calories 39.9 carb grams
» Lipton sweet ice tea bottles 16 ounces	190 calories 48.5 carb grams
» Red wine 5-ounce pour	126 calories 3.9 carb grams
» Bud Light 12 ounces	110 calories 6.6 carb grams
» Vodka 1-ounce shot	96 calories, no carb grams

PHOTO BY STEVE DIXON/GANNETT
Most area breweries have not had their beers tested for calories and nutritional information. But a new federal regulation will require that by next year.How
many
calories
are in
that
beer?New US
regs require
breweries
to provide
nutritional
data for sales
to chain
restaurants

Movin' on up: Clemson at No. 3 in poll; Ohio State still No. 1 **B1**



USC prepares for suddenly hard-luck Texas A&M **B1**

MONDAY OCTOBER 26 2015

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TODAY: CLOUDY 60-67 10-53 YESTERDAY: 10-80 10-59 PRECIP. (as of 5 p.m.) 0" FORECAST: BC

The State

COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL ELECTION

Just 2 seats, but a crowd of choices

BY CLIF LERLANC clerlanc@thestate.com

Columbia voters have a veritable feast of offerings in two races next month's city elections — from surging newbies, a perennial candidate and a controversial, citywide incumbent to a legacy contender. Five challengers are

Inside

An overview of the candidates. **7A**

seeking to fill an open District 2 seat, which is a sweeping, diverse district that stretches through the city center into neighborhoods from St. Andrews to Edgewood to Dentsville, touching Five Points and running south to Olympia.

The winner will gain the seat held for six years by outgoing Councilman Brian DeQuincey Newman, who decided not to run again.

In the second race, six candidates are jostling to win a citywide, or at-large, seat. The five challengers to councilman Cameron Runyan are likely a record

SEE COUNCIL, 7A

Gaggle of contenders seek to oust Councilman Cameron Runyan

Will incumbent reach a runoff?

District 2 race has shadows of the past, faces for the future

THE S.C. STATE FAIR



The 2015 State Fair

Fair wraps up 2015 run as shooting probe continues

BY GLEN LUKE FLANAGAN glflanagan@thestate.com

Investigators have developed suspects in a Saturday night shooting that injured a 15-year-old, as the S.C. State Fair opened Sunday for its final day.

The Richland County Sheriff's Department released no additional information Sunday afternoon about the incident on the Midway, which happened just before 8:30 Saturday night.

Spokesman Lt. Curtis Wilson said the teenager was in stable condition Sunday, after being shot in the lower body. Sheriff Leon Lott said Saturday

Sheriff's Department: 15-year-old shooting victim in stable condition

No security added at fair Sunday

Some say Saturday night shooting a cause for concern

procedure.

Still, some patrons were concerned.

"This is a place where you're supposed to have fun, not a place where stuff like that should happen," said Columbia resident Kenedi McLeod, who visited the fair Sunday with her mother and younger sisters.

Lexington resident Debbie Corbett came out to spend

into the fair.

"All I can say is the federal government has a lot more assets than we do and people are still getting on planes with guns," Goodman said.

"There's no perfect system," Goodman said the fair has not confiscated a gun at the entrance gate in his memory, though knives and other hand weapons have been found.

66
THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS A LOT MORE ASSETS THAN WE DO, AND PEOPLE ARE STILL GETTING ON PLANES WITH GUNS.

Fair manager Gary Goodman

since 2004. Then, three teens were injured after someone fired into a crowd in what law enforcement, without elaborating, said was a gang-related incident.

One of the teens, Robert Lee Morris Jr., died several days later. He was 14.

PALMETTO VOICES

ANOTHER MOMENT OF GRACE

Reba Campbell recounts watching the floods' devastation in her hometown from abroad — and being overcome by the amazing grace her neighbors displayed during and after the ordeal. **C1**



NEW RULES AHEAD CAT CONTROVERSY IN LEXINGTON

An overhaul of Lexington County's rules on what's permissible in its 123 buildings is in the works, after a flap over the coroner's cat. **A3**

PALMETTO

COMICS HAVE NEW LOOK, MORE PUZZLES

On today's comics pages you will find a new look and new puzzles. Fear not, the same familiar faces appear in the strips. We haven't dropped any of your favorites, just rearranged them on the page.

The new look is part of a company-wide initiative to simplify production of these pages.

The upside: We have added two new puzzles. Celebrity Clinger

Falcons fly past Titans

Final: Atlanta 10 - Tenn. 7 • Sports, 1B



Aiken Standard

YOUR LOCAL NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1867

MONDAY, October 26, 2015

AIKENSTANDARD.COM

Vol. 149, No. 299 Aiken, S.C. ★ 75¢



The Alley's renovation project, shown here in its Oct. 21 condition, is to include new water and sewer lines as well as burial of utility lines.

The Alley renovation on track for deadline

BY BILL BENGTON
bbengton@aikenstandard.com

The pieces — including decorative bricks — are coming together in The Alley, with completion of the renovation project's first phase about three weeks away.

Pearce Atkins, Aiken's assistant city engineer, pointed out progress during a site visit Wednesday afternoon, noting that the northbound lanes of Laurens Street are now back to business as usual.

"We demolished, we disrupted and now we're restoring," Atkins said. Points of progress include the laying of the sanitary sewer line's first sections, along with a new section of water line between Laurens Street and Bee Lane.

"They're pretty much on schedule," said George Branton, Aiken's director of engineering and utilities.

Decorative bricks, known as pavers, are now in place between Aiken Brewing Co. and Lionel Smith Ltd., at Laurens Street and The Alley, and the same pattern and material are to be used in the reach toward Newberry Street in the months ahead.

Please see **ALLEY**, Page 12A



The intersection of The Alley and Laurens Street, in the midst of a months-long renovation project, is now clear, while work in The Alley itself continues.

GALLERY
See more photos from
The Alley renovation project
at aikenstandard.com

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BENGTON

Council will vote today on building height; talk road repairs

BY DAN BROWN
dbrown@aikenstandard.com

Aiken City Council will consider a decision on a couple of high profile issues during its Monday night meeting that have generated their fair share of controversy.

Council will hold a public hearing and consider a second and final reading of an ordinance increasing the City's maximum building height for the downtown business district from 50 feet to 55 feet; the City will also hear a report from City Manager John Klimm on moving forward with a resolution to the Gem Lakes extension area roads issue.

Council meets at 7 p.m. in the Municipal Building's City Council Chambers, 214 Park Ave.

The new height ordinance received a recommendation from the Aiken Planning Commission on Oct. 13.

A \$10 million Hotel Aiken redevelopment proposal by owner Neel Shah prompted Council to revisit its height ordinance after previously denying a motion to raise the height of downtown buildings from 50 feet to 75 feet in August.

Shah redesigned his redevelopment plan and lowered the proposed height to 55 feet. Council approved the new 55-foot height ordinance during its Sept. 28 meeting.

The other "big-ticket" item up for Council's review is a report back from the city manager on how to move forward with the Gem Lakes extension area road issues.

Prompted by a petition by Council member Reggie Ebner, Council agreed in its Oct. 12 meeting to spend what it takes to repair Gem Lakes extension area roads and other failing infrastructure despite the lack of a clear price tag for the project.

After denying Ebner's original motion by a 4-3 vote, Council proposed a second motion, striking Ebner's softer language of "encourage" the developer to share in the cost of repairs — replacing it with the stiffer verb "include" financial participation from the developer.

Please see **COUNCIL**, Page 12A

AREA DEATHS

Charlie MacArthur Allen, Aiken

John C. Isaac, Salley

Kathleen H. Crowe, Aiken

Melba E. Stewart Garrett, Clearwater

Deaths and Funerals, 6A

WEATHER

Attendance up at Western Carolina State Fair

BY DEDE BILES
dbiles@aikenstandard.com

People are pouring through the gates at the Western Carolina State Fair, which opened at the Aiken Fairgrounds on Oct. 22 and runs through Friday.

"It's been a great fair so far," said Tommy Molony, Western Carolina's vice president of fair operations. "I don't know the exact figures yet, but attendance is on

GALLERY
See more photos from the State Fair
at www.aikenstandard.com

the positive trend.
"I think the economy is getting better," he said. "We also increased our advertising budget and the coverage area for it, so we are reaching more outlying areas. We are doing advertising in both English and





LOCAL
NMB RESCUE SQUAD
RARING FOR FISH FRY
 Just like a list of important fire safety reminders, a local rescue squad's annual community afternoon of dining never gets old. **3A**



SPORTS

CLEMSON MOVES UP IN AP POLL

Ohio State remains at the top, but check out who moved up and who moved down in the Associated Press poll released Sunday after Saturday's action **1B**

MONDAY OCTOBER 26 2015

\$1

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NEWS ALL DAY,
 YOUR WAY



Mac Hardwick drives a truck for Horry County's Stormwater Mosquito Program in the Indigo Creek community of Murrells Inlet.

LOCAL

Floodwaters cause rise in mosquito population

Mosquito population booming because of historic flooding

County officials battling bugs by investigating and spraying by trucks and planes

Upcoming cooler temperatures should ebb growth

BY ELIZABETH TOWNSEND
 etownsend@thesunnews.com

Blood-thirsty villains are terrorizing Horry County this Halloween season.

As the Waccamaw River drops, the mosquito population is rising in malicious swarms, feeding and feasting on human and animal flesh.

Mosquito season begins in spring and usually tapers off in October or around the first frost, but recent historic flooding and



ground for the bugs to boom.

"Our mosquito season was very good this year because of the drought until the flood came," Horry County spokeswoman Lisa Boarcier said.

Before the flood, county officials had almost no mosquito complaints. Now numerous calls

"All the rain we've had just provided the perfect habitat for them," said Tom Garigen, Horry County Stormwater Department manager.

Garigen said officials are using their full force to deal with all the bugs. Cooler temperatures early last

hatching, but the delay didn't last as the weather warmed up and mosquitoes multiplied.

"It's all weather-driven. Whatever Mother Nature throws at us, we have to take it on and deal with it," James Brock, Horry County Mosquito Control Program manager, said of mosquito season.

Brock and his team investigate areas around Horry County as complaints come in, and he looks at landing rates to determine which areas need treatment.

Brock said he counted 20 to 25 mosquitoes landing on him per minute in the Lee's Landing area on Thursday.

"If I've got 20 or 25 on me that I can see, just imagine how many are on my back that I can't see," Brock said.

He goes into infested areas, sets a timer for one minute, and serves himself up as lunch to gauge the severity of a mosquito problem in any particular area.

Ground spraying is warranted for landing rate counts of five mosquitoes or more a minute and aerial spray is needed for landing rate counts of 10 or more, officials said.

Brock usually tries to investigate each complaint that comes in on the mosquito control program's hotline, but lately he's been getting around 60 to 70 calls a day. He had 26 calls in July and 24 calls in August, which are usually peak months in mosquito season.

"The phone is ringing off the hook," he said. Once the record rainfall



NATION

OSU PARADE CRASH VICTIMS IDENTIFIED

Victims identified Sunday in fatal car crash after a woman drove her car through parade-goers at the Oklahoma State University homecoming parade on Saturday. **5A**



SPORTS

FLIP SAUNDERS PASSES AWAY

Minnesota Timberwolves President of Basketball Operations and Head Coach Phil "Flip" Saunders passed away Sunday at the age of 60. **4B**



SPORTS

CCU FOOTBALL WRAP-UP

Coastal Carolina remains unbeaten and running back De'Angelo Henderson sets FCS touchdown record. **6B**



PANTHERS TRY TO SAY UNBEATEN

SPORTS, B1



LOGANO WINS AGAIN

SPORTS, B1

Herald-Journal

SPARTANBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA

Monday, October 26, 2015



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TODAY **TUE** **WED**

 59°/48° 52°/52° 70°/51°

Complete forecast, A10

LOCAL IN BRIEF

One person killed Sunday night on I-26

A person was killed in a two-vehicle wreck Sunday night. South Carolina Highway Patrol responded at 6:54 p.m. to a vehicle accident at Interstate 26 eastbound near exit 18. Spartanburg County Coroner Rusty Clevenger released a statement that his office was investigating a traffic fatality at the scene. The victim's identity was not yet released by the coroner's office. South Carolina Highway Patrol Lance Cpl. David Jones said the fatal accident involved a tractor-trailer truck and another vehicle. Jones said the investigation was ongoing. For updates, visit GoUpstate.com.

STATE

Ceremony marks solemn milestone

As he has each year since taking office in 2011, Attorney General Alan Wilson is preparing to mark a solemn milestone regarding domestic violence. **A6**

TIP SHEET

TODAY

- Spartanburg City Council meets at 5:30 p.m. in council chambers at City Hall, 145 W. Broad St., Spartanburg.
- Spartanburg County Building Code Appeals Board meets at 4:30 p.m. at the County Administration Building, 366 N. Church St., Spartanburg.
- Spartanburg School District 5 meets at 6:30 p.m. at the district office, 100 N. Danzler Road, Duncan.

TUESDAY

- Spartanburg County Land Management Board of Appeals meets at 4:30 p.m. at the County Administration Building, 366 N. Church St., Spartanburg.
- Spartanburg County Board of Assessment Appeals meets at 9:30 a.m. at the County Administration Building, 366 N. Church St., Spartanburg.

KERRY'S PLAN FOR JERUSALEM SITE

Idea leaves issues unresolved

By Josef Federman
The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — John Kerry's latest Mideast mission has aimed for the modest goal of easing tensions around Jerusalem's most sensitive holy site — the focal point of more than a month of deadly unrest.

But the steps announced by the U.S. secretary of state over the weekend did little to address the deeper issues behind the fighting, disappointing the Palestinians and raising fears that even if calm is restored, it is just a matter of time before another round of violence erupts.

During a swing through the

region, Kerry announced the steps on Saturday after several days of meetings with Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian leaders. The highlight was a Jordanian proposal to install surveillance cameras at the Jerusalem holy site that is known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary.

More than a month of violence has been fueled by Palestinian allegations that Israel is trying to change the delicate status quo at the site, which allows non-Muslims to visit but not pray.



Israeli security forces stand guard as they prevent Palestinians from approaching the area where Palestinian Ahmed Ikmal, 16, was killed Saturday after he allegedly attempted to stab an Israeli security guard at the Jalama checkpoint near Jenin, West Bank. MAJDI MOHAMMED/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEE IDEA, A5

CLEVELAND PARK

Volunteers celebrate playground completion

By Chris Lavender
chris.lavender@shj.com

Volunteers not only built a new playground at Cleveland Park, they have helped to heal hearts that were broken by the accident at the park, according to Benji Easler's father.

Easler, 6, was killed and other children were seriously injured when a miniature train derailed in March 2011. Playground equipment at the park was removed two months later following an unfavorable safety inspection.

A new playground, completed through the work of more than 2,000 volunteers, will open by early December. County officials decided to build with volunteers as a way to help residents unite and heal after the derailment.

Benji's parents, Dwight and Tabitha Easler, visited the park during the week to offer volunteers their support. The county worked with the families of the victims of the accident to help design the new playground.

The park's plans were drawn to incorporate elements of Spartanburg's history and culture, and ideas from students at the Cleveland Academy of Leadership.



Dwight Easler, father of Benji Easler, talks about his son's life and his faith during a ceremony Sunday to honor the efforts of the volunteers who worked on the new playground at Cleveland Park in Spartanburg. ALEX C. HICKS JR./ALEX.HICKS@SHJ.COM

during a ceremony held at the park's event center. "It's been a unique experience for me this week to be involved with this," he said.

After the accident, Easler said he planned to never go back to the park. "When I rode by this park a few times

Easler told the volunteers that through his family's grieving process, they were able to find hope and renewal through faith. "I want you to know that what you have done this week as volunteers has really symbolized what has happened in many of lives

"It really has brought the community back together in my opinion, and it's really a sign of this being a unified community. We've had people from all over the county come and share their time and talents here. It's just been remarkable."

— County Councilman Michael Brown

you work out here, when you do things in the future of this park, you do it with excellence because there will be other little Benjis that will come here they need a place to play. They need a place of safety. They need a place where they can play with their brothers and sisters, and you can be part of that."

County Councilman Michael Brown said it was amazing to see the park's transformation.

"It's just coming together at the right time and to have Benji's family reach out this week, they have been such a blessing," Brown said. "It really has brought the com-



Morning News

MONDAY OCTOBER 26, 2015

The Voice of the Pee Dee

TODAY'S WEATHER

Mostly cloudy; breezy, not as warm. High 69, low 53. DETAILS 2A

75 cents

Pamplico Highway

\$144 million widening an example of cronyism, critics say

BY CASSIE COPE
The State
copes@thestate.com

FLORENCE — The traffic on Pamplico Highway was so light on a Tuesday in August that two conservation activists could lie down in the middle of the two-lane highway, S.C. 51, during rush hour for about a minute before a vehicle appeared.

But the S.C. Transportation Infrastructure Bank wants to widen 24 miles of the highway to five lanes.

The busiest stretch of the highway carried 9,000 vehicles per day, on average, in 2014. In contrast, the busiest stretch of Richland County's three-lane Hardscrabble Road carried more than twice that number of vehicles — 23,900 per day.

"It's safe to take a nap in the middle of the road," activist Dana Beach said of Pamplico Highway. The Florence County road does not have enough traffic to justify spending the estimated \$144.4 million in state and local money that it will cost to widen it, he said.

So why widen it?

Politics, say critics of the state Infrastructure Bank, including Beach, who is head of the S.C. Coastal Conservation League, often critical of development.

Critics long have complained the Infrastructure Bank's state-financed, road-building efforts are driven by Statehouse clout, not the state's road needs.

The recent flooding that devastated roads and bridges across South Carolina only increases the need to reform or abolish the Infrastructure Bank, making maintenance a priority over the bank's construction of new roads, says state Sen. Tom Davis, R-Beaufort.

But Infrastructure Bank supporters say the money slated for widening Pamplico Highway will be well spent.

"The (Infrastructure Bank) has really been good for improving the

Step by step



PHOTOS BY MELISSA ROLLINS FOR MORNING NEWS

Florence School District 1 physical therapy assistant Kari Wise gets a smile from Tanjah Poole on Friday morning when working with her to stand up from her wheelchair. Poole has cerebral palsy and is learning to assist in lifting herself.

Therapists make a difference assisting Florence 1 students

BY MELISSA ROLLINS
Morning News
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FLORENCE — October is National Physical Therapy Month. In Florence School District 1, there are two therapists and a therapy assistant working with students ages 3-21 to help them make the most of their educational opportunities.

When her sister was in medical school, Kari Wise realized that she didn't actually want to be an architect; she wanted to be a physical therapist like her sister was training to be.

"I was a senior in high school when my sister Kami was at MUSC, so I got to go to the

gross-anatomy lab and that kind of thing," Wise said. "When she graduated, she was doing evaluations when the inpatient rehab opened at Carolinas (Hospital), and I got to see that. I just realized that I never wanted to sit behind a desk. I love to talk and love to be around people. And with physical therapy, there are so many settings that you can

Wise took classes at Florence-Darlington Technical College and Greenville Technical College, earning her associate degree in health science with an emphasis on physical therapy.



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@scnow.com.

her to working with her sister and some of those same pedi-

atric patients.

"Children can start coming to therapy from birth," Wise said. "So when I started in the school system, a lot of the patients I had seen from birth I saw later when they started school."

Working with her sister has been a great experience, Wise said.

"We've had some fun with it," she said. "Kids get confused, and they'll call me Ms. Kami and that kind of thing, but we work well together."

Wise said that working with children — specifically special-needs children, whether

See WISE, Page 6A

Browntown hosts annual open house

BY DIANNE OWENS
The Weekly Observer
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BROWNTOWN — Though the crowd was smaller than in previous years, about 200 people took time out of their schedules Saturday to visit the Browntown Museum in southern Florence County to reminisce about a



Church brings disaster assistance to Johnsonville

BY DIANNE OWENS
The Weekly Observer
dowens@florencenews.com

JOHNSONVILLE — In a scene that has played out over and over during the past 17 days, water, cleaning supplies and other assistance were on the menu of activities Saturday at White Chapel Holiness Church, just a handful of miles west of Johnsonville.

The hastily put-together event

Blossom Generette and church administrator Judith Rich.

"We are here to canvas the area, assess the damage and register people with FEMA," FEMA public information officer Mike Wade said. Because some people in the community are homebound or "shut-ins," he explained, and to better assess damage of others who had come to register with FEMA, teams of three or four were sent into the community.

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SILENT WITNESS

SC marks solemn milestone of domestic violence

By MEG KINNARD
Associated Press

COLUMBIA—As he has each year since taking office in 2011, Attorney General Alan Wilson is preparing to mark a solemn milestone.

On Thursday, the top prosecutor takes part in the 18th annual Silent Witness ceremony. On the steps of the Statehouse, relatives, friends and advocates hold up life-sized silhouettes representing each person killed in South Carolina during the previ-

ous year as a result of domestic violence. A bell rings once for each victim.

"Everybody has to own the problem," Wilson recently told The Associated Press. "It's a societal problem, not just a government problem."

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. In September, an annual report by the Violence Policy Center again ranked South Carolina worst in the nation for deadly violence against women, with a rate of 2.32 women killed per 100,000 peo-

ple in 2013. That's more than twice the national average and represents 57 known deaths, compared with 50 a year earlier, according to the study, which uses the latest data available from the FBI for crimes involving one male killing one female.

It marked South Carolina's fourth time atop the list, where the state ranked second last year and has been in the top 10 annually for the last 18 years.

See WITNESS, page 3A



ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

South Carolina Attorney Gen. Alan Wilson reads off the names of 46 people killed by loved ones in South Carolina in 2013 as volunteers hold up silhouettes representing the victims at the 17th annual Silent Witness Domestic Violence ceremony to honor victims of domestic violence at the South Carolina Statehouse in Columbia.



PHOTOS BY ARIEL GILREATH | INDEX-JOURNAL

ABOVE: The entire Greenwood Christian School came out to look at the floats that ninth through 12th grade students designed for a class competition Friday afternoon. BELOW: Senior Ben Pettit plays the Cheshire Cat on Greenwood Christian School's senior class "Alice in Wonderland" float.

GCS students make classic Disney-themed floats

By ARIEL GILREATH
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Students wandered down to the football field Friday afternoon to brightly decorated floats in the theme of classic Disney movies put together as a high school student council project by each grade level.

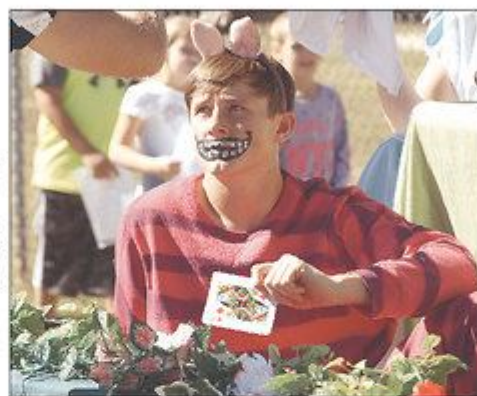
The floats were meant to be a celebration of Greenwood Christian School's homecom-

ing, which was two weeks ago, but heavy rain and flooding prevented students from working on them.

Angel McAllister, marketing director at Greenwood Christian, said there could not have been a more perfect week for students to work on the floats.

"It promotes teamwork, creativity and it's also a competition," McAllister said.

See FLOATS, page 4A



LAKELANDS

Nonprofits help others to help themselves

By MARY KATE MCGOWAN
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At one time, Wendi Andrews, a single mother of three, was in a "very dark place in life" and needed food stamps to feed her family.

"What helped me was people giving me a hand up," she said. "I don't want anyone to enable me in my mess."

Now the Food Bank of Greenwood County executive director, Andrews said she knows the difference between appreciation and entitlement as well as true food need and usage.

"It felt so good when I had the money to buy my children their Christmas, or I had money to buy the food," she said. "I was appreciative."

Andrews has been in the nonprofit world since 2008 when she started working at the United Way in Greenwood for about six years. She became the food bank executive director on May 1.

"I want to be in the business of giving people a hand up instead of a handout because that's what I think is most beneficial to our clients," Andrews said.

With a grant from the Self Family Foundation, Andrews started the "Sowing Seeds" program that provides residents an opportunity to receive food four times a year while investing a small amount toward their food security.

The program runs from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursdays and Andrews said people have to either be employed or on a fixed income.

Andrews is hoping the program grows to include classes on canning, couponing, budgeting and easy cooking recipes. She said if someone cannot see the benefit of getting canned or dried foods and eggs for \$3.50, the program is not for them.

Because Andrews believes in helping people and not crippling them, she does not want the food bank to create a dependence or replace food stamps.

Currently working on identifying

Even as CEO, physical therapists don't stop answering call lights



By MARY KATE MCGOWAN
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Kristin Manske has made her home in Greenwood, at least since



CLOSER
LOOK



Trump, Carson do well in new poll **5A**



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IN BEAUFORT COUNTY

Switch to chip cards lagging

For smaller businesses, costs are an obstacle to installing the new technology that makes credit cards more secure.

By ASHLEY FAHEY
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Many small Lowcountry businesses are holding off on upgrading to new anti-fraud credit card technology.

That decision comes despite an Oct. 1 deadline from financial institutions requiring all retailers to have EMV, or Europay MasterCard Visa, technology to process chip cards. The chips add an extra level of security that traditional magnetic stripe cards do not have.

But making that transition isn't a priority for all businesses — especially small, local retailers.

"We're not ready for it," said Kelly Smith, manager of Common Ground in Beaufort. The transition is "not in our plan for the next six months."

The coffee shop's position reflects a national reluctance on the part of some business owners to convert to the new technology, despite the passing of the liability deadline.

A majority of national retailers have made the switch, but the terminals and associated software can be expensive for small businesses. The average cost to install EMV equipment, which usually requires hiring technology consultants,

Please see CARDS on 7A



The Associated Press

The level of risk by not having the technology varies by business, but "higher-ticket merchants" obviously have more to lose if they don't convert since they will be liable for fraudulent charges made by chip cards that are scanned with outdated technology, said Mike Novitski, director of sales and marketing at Merchant Services.

'I HAVE NO JUSTICE'

2 years after a hit-and-run driver killed her daughter, a mother remains without answers



By CAITLIN TURNER
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In a small Hilton Head Island home filled with images of a woman with a bright smile, Diana Mercer Imler held a picture of her daughter Jenny to her chest.

"She was a free spirit," Imler said Friday. "She loved nature, and that is what (led) her to leave to go to the beach" on the day she died two years ago.

Mercer, 34, was killed Nov. 3, 2013, by a hit-and-run driver as she walked along South Forest Beach Drive. She was struck near Bayberry Lane on her way to watch a total solar eclipse.

Please see JUSTICE on 7A

A STALLED INVESTIGATION

According to Sgt. Bob Beres of the S.C. Highway Patrol, there are no new developments in Jenny Mercer's case.

Beres said it's common for fatal hit-and-run cases to go unsolved. As with any criminal investigation, evidence is key to finding answers.

With no known witnesses or recordings of the incident, the investigation came to a standstill.

Beres said the case remains active. **Anyone with information related to Mercer's death should call the Highway Patrol at 843-953-6010.** Beres said.

That is little comfort to Mercer's mother, Diana Mercer Imler. She said she knows the person who killed her daughter is out there somewhere.

"As I was told by the Highway Patrol, 'We can't make a person tell the truth,'" Imler said.

JAY KARR • Staff photo

Diana Mercer Imler is photographed on Friday holding a portrait of her daughter, Jenny Mercer, who was killed in a hit-and-run incident in November 2013. For a video of Imler talking about

Brian Symmes

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