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- Bart Hodges, Lake Wylie

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SEN. PEELER ON TRACK

Thank God for State Senate Majority Leader Harvey Peeler (R-Dist. 14). On November 16th, Senator Peeler hand-delivered a letter to Governor Nikki Haley exposing her duplicity regarding Obama's refugee program. "You are on record supporting this refugee program," Peeler wrote. "I implore you to cancel the agreement you and the Department of Social Services have made with third-party groups to provide shelter to potential terrorists."

In her predictably hypocritical fashion, Nikki Haley has since written Obama, petitioning him to slow approval of "Syrian," and not international, refugees. Everyone knows that ISIS supporters come from many Muslim countries, not just Syria. More familiar with the nature of the crisis and more proactive solutions, Senator Peeler should run for governor.

- Richard T Hines, Mayesville



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Deadline extended for individual FEMA assistance

Gov. Nikki Haley announced Monday her request for a 30-day extension of the registration period for individual assistance from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has been granted.

Kershaw County residents affected by October's heavy rains and historic flooding now have until Jan. 4, 2016, to apply for disaster assistance with FEMA and the Small Business Administration (SBA). The original deadline was this Friday.

Flood survivors who sustained losses in Kershaw and other designated counties can apply for assistance by registering online at DisasterAssistance.gov or by calling 800-621-FEMA (3362). Disaster assistance applicants who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability and use a TTY may call (800) 462-7585. Those who use 711 or Video Relay Service may call 800-621-FEMA (3362). The toll-free telephone numbers will operate 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week until further notice.

Assistance can include money for temporary rental assistance and essential home repairs for primary homes, low-interest loans from the SBA to cover uninsured property losses and other programs to help survivors recover from the effects of the disaster.



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148 + 280 South Carolina's predictive power

CHARLESTON — Sen. Tim Scott, who evidently has not received the memo explaining that politics is a grim and bitter business, laughs easily and often, as when, during lunch in this city's humming downtown, he explains that South Carolina's Lowcountry is benefiting from what are called "halfbacks." These are migrants who moved from Northern states to Florida in search of warmth but, finding high prices and congestion, then moved halfway back, settling in South Carolina. Doing so, they have located in the state where, Scott believes and history suggests, the 2016 Republican presidential nomination will begin to come to closure.

Since picking Ronald Reagan over John Connally and George H.W. Bush in 1980, South Carolina's Republican primary electorate has sided with the eventual nominee every four years, with the exception of 2012, when Newt Gingrich from neighboring Georgia was rewarded for denouncing as "despicable" a journalist's question during a debate here. This year, South Carolina votes just 10 days before the selection of convention delegates accelerates with the March 1 "SEC primary," so-named because five of the 12 primaries that day are in Southern states represented in that football conference.

The Human Snarl, AKA Donald

COMMENTARY



George Will

Trump, is leading polls here, where South Carolinians share the national consensus that, in Scott's mild words, "however it is today is not the way it should be." But it remains to be seen whether Republicans will vote for Trump while so

warmly embracing the senator who is his stylistic antithesis. Scott is "an unbridled optimist" (his description) who thinks Republican chances in 2016 depend on whether their nominee is an "aspirational leader" or someone "selling fear." Scott's un-Trumpian demeanor is both a cause and an effect of his popularity: He was elected with 61 percent of the vote in 2014 to complete the term of a senator who resigned. Which is why 13 of the Republican presidential candidates have eagerly accepted his invitations to hold

town meetings with him. He took Ohio Gov. John Kasich to Hilton Head because it has so many Ohioans, some of them halfbacks. All the candidates covet Scott's endorsement, which will happen only if, as the Feb. 20 vote draws near, polls show a close race, perhaps a four-point difference between the leaders.

This could be a choice between two of Scott's Senate colleagues, Florida's Marco Rubio and Texas' Ted Cruz. If, he says, South Carolinians choose well — "not sending independents fleeing in the opposite direction" — America will be en route to a Republican presidency.

Scott, 50, became a congressman by defeating in a Republican primary the son of Strom Thurmond, the Dixiecrat presidential candidate in 1948 and then eight-term U.S. senator. In 2013, Scott became the second African-American Republican senator since Reconstruction (Ed Brooke of Massachusetts was the first), and today he and New Jersey Democrat Cory Booker are the Senate's only African-Americans.

Henry Olsen of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, whose specialty is conservative politics, says that among the four states that vote in February (the others are Iowa, New Hampshire and Nevada), South Carolina's electorate "best mirrors the nation's."

Writing for National Review Online, Olsen says the state's primary electorate closely reflects the national balance among the GOP's four factions — "moderates and liberals" (32 percent), "somewhat conservatives" (32 percent), "very conservative evangelicals" (28 percent) and "very conservative seculars" (6 percent). Iowa, says Olsen, favors candidates who are very religious and conservative, New Hampshire favors moderates, Nevada favors conservative seculars. Here, however, a dominant cohort is that which Olsen calls the national party's "ballast" — the "somewhat conservatives."

South Carolina's primary 11 weeks from now will be as distant from the state's 1980 primary that chose Reagan as Reagan's first presidential victory later that year was from Franklin Roosevelt's last victory in 1944. And when South Carolina voted in 1980, the huge and still growing Boeing plant in North Charleston, the Mercedes plant in North Charleston and the BMW plant in Spartanburg were still in its future. As were the halfbacks who are another reason South Carolina no longer has stereotypical Deep South de-





mographics.

And why whichever Republican wins here will have done so in the first 2016 contest that approximates the electorates of the swing states that will determine the 45th president. This fact must be deeply satisfying to Nikki Haley, 43, South Carolina's Indian-American governor, and to Scott,

who was born 44 days after enactment of the 1965 Voting Rights Act that made all of this possible.

George Will's email address is georgewill@washpost.com.

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148 Lawmaker: Up security at S.C. abortion clinics

COLUMBIA (AP) — A Democratic state representative asked GOP Gov. Nikki Haley on Monday to increase security at the three clinics in South Carolina that provide abortions after last week's deadly shootings at a Planned Parenthood in Colorado.

"It doesn't matter whether you're pro-life or pro-choice; our focus right now should be to make sure what happened in Colorado Springs doesn't happen" in South Carolina, said Rep. Mia McLeod of Columbia, a three-term House member who's running for an open Senate seat in 2016.

"We need increased security at South Carolina clinics now," she added, without being specific.

McLeod called on the governor to coordinate with state and local law enforcement to monitor clinics in Charleston, Columbia and Greenville.

Haley's office said the governor's already doing that. Officials with the State Law Enforcement Division and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security have told Haley there are "no known threats" to Planned Parenthood in the Southeast, said her spokeswoman, Chaney Adams.

"The governor will continue to communicate with law enforcement to make sure we do everything we can to keep all South Carolinians safe, as violence is never acceptable in our state," Adams said.

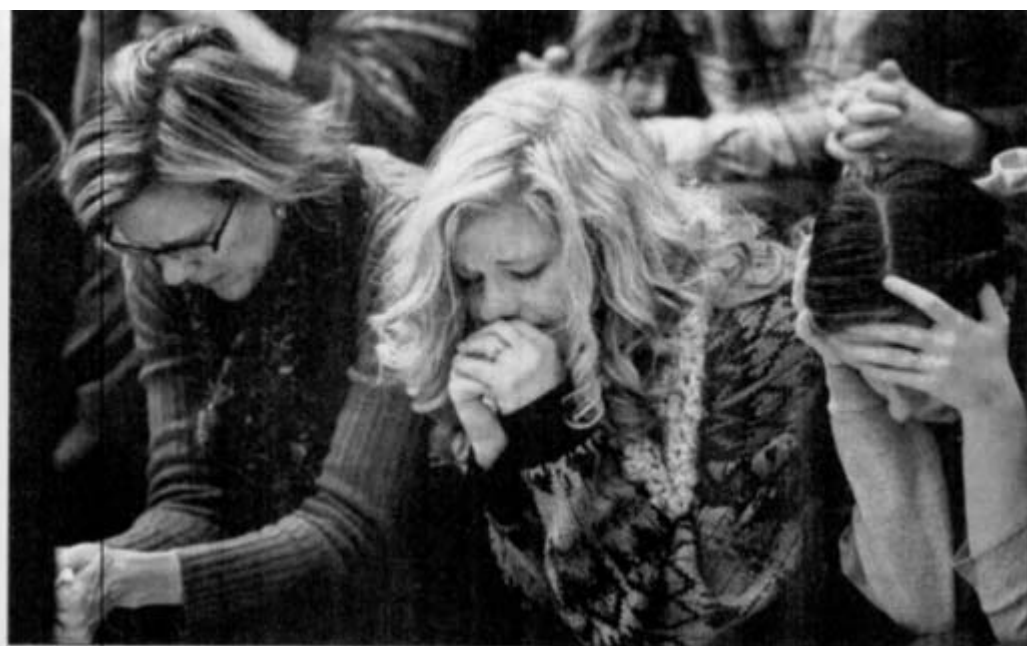
Robert Dear, a 57-year-old former South Carolina resident, is accused of

opening fire Friday at a clinic in Colorado Springs, Colorado, killing three people and injuring nine others. Colorado Springs police have declined to disclose any information on his motive.

"I'm afraid some of the rhetoric being tossed around by some South Carolina politicians may motivate someone here at home to try the same thing," McLeod said.

Her request comes a day before a House Oversight panel, on which she sits, holds its next hearing on abortion clinics in the state. The panel's investigation was among several launched by Republicans following the release last summer of secretly taped videos showing Planned Parenthood officials in other states discussing the collection of fetal organs for research.

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THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

People attend a vigil Saturday on University of Colorado-Colorado Springs' campus for those killed in Friday's deadly shooting at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs, Colorado. S.C. Rep. Mia McLeod of Columbia has called on Gov. Nikki Haley to increase security at the state's three abortion clinics in response to the Colorado shootings.

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Haley to farmers: 'We can't help you'

Turbeville man calls governor's comments 'a slap in the face'

BY JIM HILLEY

jim@theitem.com

"If you are underinsured, we can't help you."

That was Gov. Nikki Haley's message to the state's farmers as she outlined projected costs from October's 1,000-year flood at a news conference in Columbia Tuesday.

"Insurance is key for farmers," she said.

However, Marshall Thomas, Government Affairs Division Counsel for the Farm Bureau Federation said fed-

eral insurance programs are not designed to cover events such as those that occurred in the state this year.

"None of the business planning in the world could have predicted two disasters in one year — drought and flood," Thomas said. "Even the most diligent farmers who got all the crop

insurance available are making the decision whether to remain in business next year — if it hasn't already been decided for them."

The governor also said the state will need to pay at least \$114.8 million to



HALEY

meet its match of federal spending on damaged roads caused by the flood. That includes spending on federally eligible roads (\$71 million), public assistance roads (\$37 million) and ineligible roads (\$28.4 million),

she said. Haley will ask the General Assembly to use part of \$1.2 billion in unobligated funds predicted to be

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FARMERS

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available in fiscal year 2016-17 to pay the state's share of the funding, she said.

The South Carolina governor said she will also ask the state's congressional delegation to seek \$140 million from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for housing repairs.

"We want to get people back on their feet," she said.

Turbeville farmer Jeremy Cannon said Wednesday that the fact Haley has requested money for housing but nothing for farmers is a "slap in the face."

"Haley said she will reconsider it when the insurance payments come in," Cannon said.

He said it is unlikely Congress will look at another bill later just for agriculture.

"The time is now," Cannon said. "We need the money now. We are talking \$55,000 a day in interest on \$400 million in losses."

He said 70 percent of farmers' loans come due in December.

"We can't wait three or four months," he said.

Cannon will be an invited panelist at a field hearing of the U.S. Sen. Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Friday in Council Chambers at Columbia City Hall, 1737 Main St., Columbia. The hearing will cover efforts to support recovery of South Carolina's small businesses. South Carolina U.S. Sen. Tim Scott is a member of the committee.

Thomas said agriculture is the biggest industry in South Carolina and he said he was disappointed that more action hasn't been forthcoming from the state's elected officials.

He applauded Haley for asking U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack for expedited crop insurance payments but said there is more to be done for farmers.

"Nikki (Haley) and the state haven't shown much interest in that," Thomas said.

A report done for the S.C. Department of Agriculture from London & Associates estimates direct losses to agriculture at \$374.8 million, with indirect and induced losses bringing the total to \$587.8 million.

Cannon said he has been told the department is working directly with the congressional delegation.

"There are a few things they haven't agreed with the governor on, and she has gone

around them a few times in the last few weeks and not involved them in the decision making," he said.

At Tuesday's conference, the governor said there have been \$181 million in insurance claims to private companies, and the federal government plans on paying about \$500 million to help with roads, individual damage claims and assistance to government agencies. She put the total bill for flood damage at about \$1.2 billion.

Haley said damage numbers were not released earlier so they could be more accurate.

"It's the accountant in me," she said. "You never guess numbers. It's the worst thing you can ever do. When you guess numbers, you make mistakes."

The Associated Press contributed to this article.





148 + 234 Questions linger 2 months after flood

As roads open and pests die, state has no damage estimate

BY JEFFREY COLLINS

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — The Thanksgiving weekend marks eight weeks since historic rainfall flooded parts of South Carolina.

Many things are returning to normal after up to 2 feet of rain fell in areas from Columbia to the coast from Oct. 2 to Oct. 5. Nearly 90 percent of the roads closed at the height of the storm are back open. Debris cleanup is ending. Lawmakers have started hearings to figure out how to pay for repairs.

But many questions remain. An official damage estimate has not been released, and until that figure is known, Gov. Nikki Haley and many state lawmakers say it will be impossible to commit to an exact plan on how to pay for the flood. The deadline to apply for federal assistance is Dec. 4.

Here is a look at how things are progressing since the flood:

MOSQUITOES

The swarms of mosquitoes pestering people in South Carolina have finally met their match — the cold weather.

The recent cold snap has killed off or forced into hibernation most of the mosquitoes who thrived in the pools of standing water, said Frank Carson, mosquito control manager for Charleston County.

Carson warned that if the weather turns back warm for a stretch before the next hard freeze, some of the bloodsuckers could return. The cold weather also prevents spraying, which can only be done with the temperature above 50 degrees.

"You need some consistently freezing temperatures over time. They can be in so many places. You could have them in the larval stage in standing water, and they still could survive and hatch off if it gets warmer," Carson said.

The boom in mosquitoes because of the flooding was unprecedented. Charleston County typically gets 120 complaints about mosquitoes in October. This year, workers were called 840 times, Carson said.

Carson's crews in an average October spray about 2,000 acres for mosquito larvae. This October, workers

sprayed 78,000 acres.

ROADS

Repairs to South Carolina roads are ahead of schedule.

In mid-October, the state Department of Transportation hoped to have just 86 highways and bridges still closed on Thanksgiving. Instead, there are just 69 closures — 44 roads and 25 bridges. DOT said it can't do anything with 26 of those roads because they run over dams where the owners haven't decided what to do with the damaged structures.

DOT Secretary Christy Hall said she is proud of her crews, who have put in long hours in the past eight weeks.

"The SCDOT team has shown their dedication and commitment to the people of S.C. through their hard work and perseverance," Hall said in an email.

Hall said last month she hoped to have a final estimate for how much damage to roads will cost. But she said this week that figure still isn't finalized.

AGRICULTURE

The weather was cruel in so many ways to South Carolina farmers this year.

A dry summer wiped out part of the corn crop. Then, just a few weeks before harvest, floods destroyed peanuts, cotton and other fall crops. The state Agriculture Department estimates direct losses to farmers at more than \$375 million.

The governor asked the U.S. Department of Agriculture this week to get crop insurance payments to farmers faster.

The flooding may have long-term effects as well. The water could have shifted soil and made fields unstable for heavy equipment. Perennial tree crops such as peaches could be struggling with weeks of fully saturated soils making it hard to get nutrients and breeding mold.

RAINFALL RECORDS

The rains in the state didn't end with the floods. There have been several other heavy rain events this fall, although none has reached the magnitude of the massive floods.

This will be the wettest September through November in both Columbia and Charleston.

Columbia has seen more than 26 inches of rain during meteorological fall, which is three times the normal amount.

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Charleston has had almost 30 inches of rain during the same period, which is more than 250 percent of normal rainfall, according to the Southeast Regional Climate Center.

While this likely won't be the wettest year in recorded history for Co-

lumbia, Charleston still has a chance for its wettest year in 2015.

The official recording station at the airport in North Charleston has seen 71.75 inches of rain this year. The record is 72.99 inches in 1964. Normal rainfall is about 50 inches.

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KEITH GEDAMKE / THE SUMTER ITEM

Drivers try to navigate Broad Street Extension on Oct. 4 during historic flooding. No official state damage estimate has been released two months after the flooding.



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Gov. Haley speaks at luncheon honoring Shaaron Kohl, Heather McNally

By Bob Stockton

Shaaron Kohl, proprietor of the Red Rooster Boutique and Heather McNally of the McCormick Arts Council at the Keturah, were honored at the Chamber of Commerce's Women in Business Luncheon last Monday.

S.C. Governor Nikki Haley was the guest speaker at Savannah Lakes Village's Recreation Center, and Chamber Executive Director Charlotte Tallent said it was no small trick getting the governor here.

"I asked Senator Shane Massey how to get the governor here, and he said we had to get the ladies here," Tallent said. "I asked how many, and he said 200. Well, we've sold 192 tickets, so I think we've done the job."

Massey and S.C. State Representative Anne Parks were in the audience, and Haley acknowledged Parks' support for a bill calling for the legislature voting on the record instead of just voice voting.

The governor reviewed events of the past year, including the shootings at Mother Emanuel Church, the removal of the Confederate flag from the capitol and the summer flooding.

She took questions from the audience, and topics ranged from jobs in McCormick to protecting the county's natural assets, filling the county election commission seats and improving the state's low rating on domestic violence.



McCormick
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These four ladies (l-r) were in the spotlight at the Chamber's Women in Business Luncheon: Shaaron Kohl, Chamber Executive Director Charlotte Tallent, S.C. Governor Nikki Haley, and Heather McNally. Nearly 200 people attended the luncheon to hear the governor and honor the Red Rooster's Kohl and MACK's McNally last week. -StocktonPhoto



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Governor's Request For FEMA Individual Assistance Extension granted

Governor Nikki Haley today announced that her request for a 30 day extension of the registration period for Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) Individual Assistance was granted.

South Carolinians affected by October's heavy rains and historic flooding now have until January 4, 2016, to apply for disaster assistance with FEMA and the Small Business Administration.

Flood survivors who sustained losses in the designated counties can apply for assistance by registering online at DisasterAssistance.gov or by

calling 800-621-FEMA (3362). Disaster assistance applicants who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability and use a TTY may call 800-462-7585. Those who use 711 or Video Relay Service may call 800-621-FEMA (3362). The toll-free telephone numbers will operate 7 AM to 10 PM seven days a week until further notice.

Assistance can include money for temporary rental assistance and essential home repairs for primary homes, low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration to cover uninsured property losses and

other programs to help survivors recover from the effects of the disaster.

Residents who were affected by severe storms and heavy flooding in the following 24 counties have until January 4, to apply for federal disaster assistance: Bamberg, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Clarendon, Colleton, Darlington, Dorchester, Fairfield, Florence, Georgetown, Greenville, Greenwood, Horry, Kershaw, Lee, Lexington, Marion, Newberry, Orangeburg, Richland, Spartanburg, Sumter and Williamsburg counties.



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FEMA Extension granted

148 Special Report

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Mental Health continues flood relief supports, launches Carolina United

Region Reports

The South Carolina Department of Mental Health is pleased to announce the launch of a program designed to guide members of the communities affected by the October floods to resources that will aid in their continued recovery.

Carolina United, which currently comprises 26 team members, including 22 crisis counselors, is fully funded by the Federal Emergency Management Administration with monitoring and support by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The initiative places these counselors in affected areas to guide citizens not only to behavioral health resources, but also legal, financial, housing and other resources as well.

"We'll be sending team members to several areas of South Carolina," said Program Director Jay Little.

"We are beginning with the Midlands, Orangeburg, Sumter and Georgetown areas, providing outreach to 20 counties in these communities."

"The FEMA grant will allow the DMH to continue its efforts to serve the people of South Carolina after these devastating floods," said DMH Deputy Director and Community Mental Health Services Director Geoffrey J. Mason. "Outreach staff will help to get citizens connected to the varied help they need to recover from this disaster and will supplement the ongoing work of DMH mas-

ter's level counselors, who are offering behavioral health services at Disaster Recovery Centers, mental health centers and other locations across the state."

The Crisis Counseling Program hopes to add another 50 outreach workers in an effort to serve South Carolinians in the 24 counties now

named in the Presidential Disaster Declaration. By the end of January 2016, these teams could be serving citizens across the state.

"This is not a new activity," said DMH Disaster Response Coordinator William Wells. "Almost from the time the rain began to fall, DMH's mental health centers have provided staff to assist in American Red Cross Evacuation Shelters, FEMA's Disaster Recovery Centers and Governor Nikki Haley's Team South Carolina town-hall meetings. We will continue to provide mental health supports at the Recovery Centers as long as they remain open."

To learn more about Carolina United or reach a crisis counselor in your area, call

(803) 898-8399.

The South Carolina Department of Mental Health's mission is to support the recovery of people with mental illnesses, giving priority to adults with serious and persistent mental illness and to children and adolescents with serious emotional disturbances.

The Agency serves approximately 100,000 citizens with mental illnesses, approximately 30,000 of whom are children and adolescents,



and provides outpatient services through a network of 17 community mental health centers and numerous clinics. It also operates four hospitals, one community nursing care center and three veterans' nursing homes.
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