

Title: **Trump takes S.C.; Scott elected to Full term**  
 Author: BY SE ANNA AD COX Associated Press  
 Size: 36.27 column inches  
 Aiken, SC Circulation: 19635



# Trump takes S.C.; Scott elected to full term

BY SEANNA ADCOX  
*Associated Press*

COLUMBIA — Voters in solidly Republican South Carolina chose Donald Trump for president over Hillary Clinton and elected U.S. Sen. Tim Scott to his first full term.

Trump won the state's nine electoral votes Tuesday. He needs 270 to win the presidency.

More than 6 in 10 white voters cast ballots for Trump, while 9 in 10 blacks chose Clinton. A vast majority of those who consider themselves to be white, evangelical voters — nearly 8 in 10 — backed Trump, while about one-fifth supported Clinton, according to exit polling conducted for The Associated Press and television networks in the state.

Columbia resident Joy Strange, 45, didn't like either candidate.

"I think no matter who's elected, we all lose," she said after voting. Regarding her choice for president, she said, "We've had an actor, a peanut farmer, career politicians. Why not a businessman?" Gov. Nikki Haley and other Re-

publicans reluctantly supported Trump. Haley initially backed Florida Sen. Marco Rubio before saying she'd back Ted Cruz of Texas over Trump.

But when Trump's nomination became inevitable, the second-term Republican said she'd support her party's nominee.

Other Republicans, including U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, said they'd back neither Trump nor Clinton.

Republicans hold all statewide elected offices in South Carolina and control both legislative chambers.

In 2012, Mitt Romney carried South Carolina with nearly 55 percent of the vote.

## Congressional races

All seven of South Carolina's incumbent congressmen are returning to Washington.

In the only statewide race, Scott easily defeated Democrat Thomas Dixon to secure his first full term in the seat he's held since

January 2013.

Scott became the South's first black senator since Reconstruction when Haley appointed him to fill the seat vacated by GOP Sen. Jim DeMint, who resigned to lead a conservative think tank. Voters elected Scott in 2014 to fulfill the remaining two years of DeMint's term.

Former Gov. Mark Sanford defeated Dimitri Cherny to win his second full term to the House's coastal 1st District since he won a special election in 2013 to replace Scott. Sanford represented the district for three terms before becoming governor. A 2009 scandal in which he admitted to an extramarital affair derailed his remaining tenure in that office.

Reps. Jeff Duncan, Trey Gowdy and Mick Mulvaney all easily won fourth terms to the 3rd, 4th and 5th House districts, respectively.

Mulvaney's opponent, Democrat Fran Person, was by far the best-financed challenger among the seven. The former aide to Vice

President Joe Biden, who touted his family's military service in the district that includes Shaw Air Force Base, raised \$621,000 total for the contest as of last month. But that was still half of Mulvaney's total collections.

Rep. Joe Wilson easily won a ninth term representing the 2nd District, while South Carolina's newest congressman, Rep. Tom Rice, won a third term representing the 7th, a district added after the 2010 Census, which includes Myrtle Beach.

South Carolina's longest-serving congressman and only Democrat, 12-term U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn, defeated Republican Laura Sterling in the majority-minority 6th District.

## Legislature

Republicans picked up a seat in the South Carolina House, as Rick Martin easily won the Newberry County seat held for the last 20 years by retiring Democrat Walt McLeod.



AP PHOTO BY MIC SMITH

**Sen. Tim Scott, R-S.C., speaks with supporters after winning his Senate race in North Charleston on Tuesday.**

Title: **Team South Carolina Pee Dee Day set for Oct. 28**  
 Author: From Staff Reports  
 Size: 30.38 column inches  
 Marion, SC Circulation: 3842



# Team South Carolina Pee Dee Day set for Oct. 28

State and federal officials, nonprofits will offer residents disaster relief assistance

From Staff Reports

**MARION** — Gov. Nikki Haley will visit Marion on Friday for a Team South Carolina Hurricane Matthew relief event. Team South Carolina Pee Dee

## WANT TO GO?

**WHO:** Gov. Nikki Haley, state and federal officials, and non-profit organizations

**WHAT:** Team South Carolina Pee Dee Day

**WHEN:** Friday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**WHERE:** Marion County Administrative Building, 2523 East Highway 76, Marion, SC 29571

Day will serve residents impacted by the storm from Darlington, Dillon, Florence and Marion counties and will be held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Marion County

Administrative Building.

For those impacted by river flooding in the Pee Dee area caused by Hurricane Matthew,

the Team South Carolina event will serve as a one-stop where residents can find out about resources available to families and businesses to aid recovery. Team South Carolina events bring together representatives from state and federal

See **RELIEF**, Page 3A



Title: **Team South Carolina Pee Dee Day set for Oct. 28**  
 Author: From Staff Reports  
 Size: 30.38 column inches  
 Marion, SC Circulation: 3842

# Relief

From Page 1A

agencies and non-profit organizations to assist those in need in the wake flooding and other destruction caused by Hurricane Matthew.

At the Team South Carolina Pee Dee Day residents can:

- » Register for financial assistance from FEMA

- » Apply for disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration

- » Learn more about repairing and flood proofing their home from FEMA

- » Get information about assistance for farmers with crop losses or damage from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency

- » Apply for unemployment benefits from the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce

- » Apply for food and financial assistance from the S.C. Department of Social Services

- » Get information about mental health and other healthcare services from the S.C. Department of Mental Health and the S.C. Department of Health and Human Services

- » Get help with insurance claims from the S.C. Department of Insurance

- » Receive a free kit to test well water from the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control

- » Receive a free tetanus shot from the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control

Title: **Trident Health boasts advanced care for breast health**  
 Author:  
 Size: 89.12 column inches  
 Summerville, SC Circulation: 5929



# Trident Health boasts advanced care for breast health

BY JENNA-LEY HARRISON  
 jharrison@journalscene.com

Each month at least 550 women rely on one of two mammo techs at Summerville Medical Center to tell them good or bad news about their breast screenings. They were among 5,700 mammogram screenings the hospital conducted last year alone, said spokeswoman Catherine Holly.

Denise Infinger is one of those techs, and she takes her job quite seriously. She said she's "pretty passionate" about helping and educating women on breast health and through early detection, wants to prevent them from having to endure "long-term cancer treatment."

Within the last three years she's worked in mammography, Infinger has grown close to the women she sees year after year and enjoys comforting new patients. She said she likes to "befriend" and calm the fears of "ones who come in not knowing what to expect" — the imaging equipment intimidating by its looming height and \$630,000 price tag.

Infinger knows personally

how easily the simple visit can change a life. After all, she said it was a mammogram that caught her grandmother's cancer and inspired her interest in the field.

During the screening, Infinger makes sure the image covers the entire breast wall, not wanting to miss any potential spots for cancer to hide.

"That way you know you got all the breast tissue," she said.

If the digital 2-D image she observes shows no abnormalities, Infinger can celebrate with a patient, and watch her exhale a sigh of relief for another year of clean health. But if the image

displays an irregular shape, it's Infinger's job to instruct the patient on her next step — setting up an appointment at Trident Medical Center, where more comprehensive breast care occurs within Trident Health System.

Summerville Medical only conducts MRI screenings, the preferred diagnostic tool for women with higher risks for breast cancer, Holly said. Additional and more comprehen-

sive breast care in the Trident Health system occurs at Trident Medical.

"We're that initial phase, making sure your being proactive with your health," said Dr. Greg Williams, director of medical imaging.

According to Williams, the hospital plans to amp up its breast health technology with the addition of a 3-D screening machine that utilizes tomosynthesis and better detects abnormalities that might be hidden in deeper layers of breast tissue.

Williams said the timeframe is three to five months for adding the technology to the imaging department. Trident Medical already has the machine, scheduled for unveiling next month. Williams said it's been installed but is not yet in use at the North Charleston hospital.

He said the 3-D machine slices the breast image in ways that allow techs to observe the tissue in more detail, and ultimately decreases the number of "false positives" that sometimes result from a 2-D screening.

According to Dr. Wesley Fox, Trident Medical's director of medical imaging, the facility's Breast Care Center is also the only Lowcountry hospital that offers automated 3-D breast ultrasound (ABUS), recommended for women with more dense breast tissue.

Fox said at least 40 percent of women in America have dense breast tissue and South Carolina is raising awareness about the issue.

In May Gov. Nikki Haley even signed new legislation, called Flope's Law, requiring mammogram providers give patients a mammogram report about breast density, according to [scstatehouse.gov](http://scstatehouse.gov).

The bill also requires providers "include a conspicuous notice when a mammogram shows the presence of dense breast tissue."

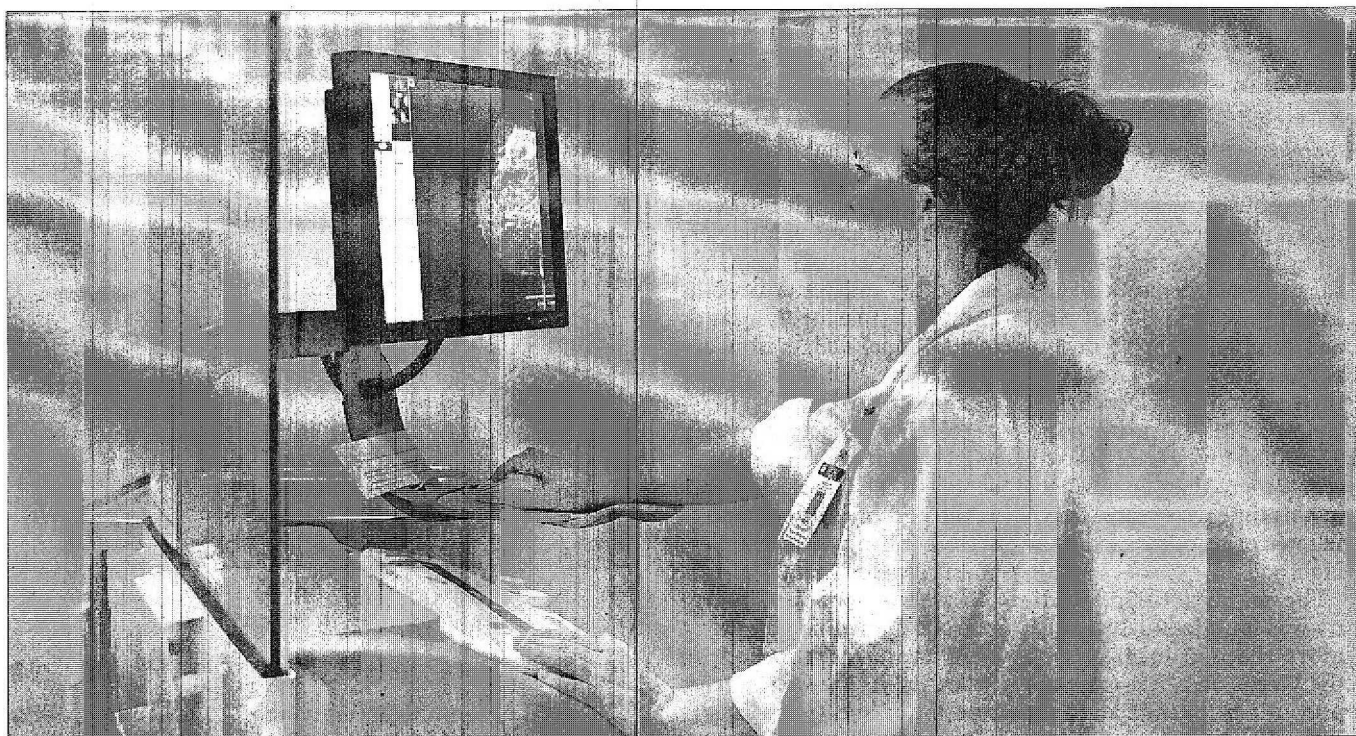
Trident Medical's Breast Cancer Center also offers breast biopsy, breast MRI, breast cancer nurse navigation, breast density evaluation, high-risk breast cancer evaluation and genetic testing referrals.

Title: **Trident Health boasts advanced care for breast health**

Author:

Size: 89.12 column inches

Summerville, SC Circulation: 5929



PHOTOS BY JENNA-LEY HARRISON/JOURNAL SCENE

**Mary Thompson, manager of medical imaging at Summerville Medical Center, analyzes an image of a patient's breast during a mammogram screening.**



**Using 2-D digital mammography technology, Thompson enlists a co-worker to illustrate how a mammogram screening works at Summerville Medical.**

Title: **Dem: Brown says he wants to be people's coroner'**  
 Author: BY JENNA-LEY HARRISON [jharrison@journalscene.com](mailto:jharrison@journalscene.com)  
 Size: 50.68 column inches  
 Summerville, SC Circulation: 5929



# Dem: Brown says he wants to be 'people's coroner'

BY JENNA-LEY HARRISON  
[jharrison@journalscene.com](mailto:jharrison@journalscene.com)

Randy Brown wants to be a coroner known for more than showing up at death scenes with his county title displayed on the back of his jacket.

"Most of the time (on TV), the coroner has on those slacks and nylon jacket that says 'coroner,'" he said.

Should the local first responder win the elected seat, he aspires to use the position as a stepping stone to additionally impact community youth.

"I want to be more than just a coroner who sits behind a desk," Brown said. "I would like to be known as the people's coroner. ...I would like to be out in the public so it's not every time you see me it's a sad occasion."

As a full-time firefighter with both St. Johns and St. Paul's fire departments—in addition to serving as a deacon at his church New Bethel Sounds of Praise in Jedburg—Brown is all about helping people.

"In my private life, I've always wanted to help and to serve behind the scenes whether I have on my uniform or not," he said.

His compassion is what drives him, giving him a unique edge he hopes he can bring to public office.

"I've always been more of a different person," he said. "When I'm out in public, people

will know me...(so) when death does come...(families) will feel more comfortable talking to me."

Though he's running as a Democrat, Brown expressed the unimportance of that detail for coroner and how he even dislikes discussing it.

"It doesn't matter if you are a Republican or a Democrat, white, black, orange," he said. "The family deserves the best death investigation no matter what the background of the deceased person."

And Brown certainly knows his share of tragedies. He lost his brother in a 2007 car crash, and his sister and her two sons perished in a house fire three years later.

"I know exactly how it feels to search for the answers," he told the Journal Scene earlier last fall.

"I would understand exactly what...a family is going through at the time of a loss of a loved one. I can sympathize. You can't say, 'I know exactly what you're going through' if you've never walked in those shoes, been in those shoes before."

Should Brown win the election, it also won't be his first time working in the coroner's office. In 2010 he served 10 months as a part-time employee and knows many of

the employees still there and how to work alongside them. That's why he said he wouldn't be changing up the staff if he becomes coroner.

"It's wise to actually keep those that are there," Brown said. "I understand that's their job, and they have a family, and for me to come in and remove them—that's not right."

Brown said other than determining whether a person is deceased, the coroner's role is to investigate the death.

While out knocking on doors and shaking residents' hands the last few months, Brown learned many don't know a coroner's true responsibilities or base their ideas off TV crime dramas.

"A lot of people don't know what a coroner is," he said. "I've been out meeting tons and tons of people...educating the public on the general role of a coroner."

Along with updating the way the coroner's office operates—bringing it into the 21st century with digital reports—Brown plans to be purposeful with local youth and establish himself as a mentor/role model, educating students on the dangers of driving while texting and drinking, especially during prom season. He also wants to root out bullying in area schools and develop rela-

tionships with principals.

"Students who are drifting far off can come visit me," Brown said.

As for the past turmoil in the coroner's office, after former coroner Chris Nisbet was indicted on a misconduct in office charge and Gov. Nikki Haley removed him from office, Brown said he doesn't believe Nisbet's actions resulted in residents' complete distrust of the county office and that his own character will restore any misgivings.

Nisbet pleaded "no contest" in August to breach of peace, a lesser charge, and was ordered to pay a small fine.

"I don't think it's so far gone...the trust of the department," Brown said. "(Nisbet's) already gone...as for myself I am a man of integrity, trustworthy and transparency. I want to be open to the public."

With two weeks to go until the election, Brown is focused on "seeing the victory on Nov. 8."

"It's been a long journey," he said. "My team and I are just hitting it hard right now."

Brown and his wife Erin—along with their dog Hershey—reside in Summerville.

For more information on Brown and his campaign visit [citizenstoelectrandybrown.com](http://citizenstoelectrandybrown.com).

Title: **Dem: Brown says he wants to be people's coroner'**  
Author: BY JENNA-LEY HARRISON [jharrison@journalscene.com](mailto:jharrison@journalscene.com)  
Size: 50.68 column inches  
Summerville, SC Circulation: 5929



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**Randy Brown**

Title: **Haley lends a helping hand and sympathetic ear**

Author: BY ROBERT ANDERSON ROBERT.ANDERSON@MYHORRYNEWS.COM

Size: 73.00 column inches

Conway, SC Circulation: 6250



# Haley lends a helping hand and sympathetic ear

BY ROBERT ANDERSON

ROBERT.ANDERSON@  
MYHORRYNEWS.COM

Gov. Nikki Haley was in Conway Friday where she met with area residents impacted by Hurricane Matthew and joined other volunteers in packing relief supplies for the victims.

Haley and her husband Michael spent several hours at the Conway Recreation Center as part of Team South Carolina Waccamaw River Day, which was designed to offer assistance and relief to victims of the hurricane and the flooding of the Waccamaw River that followed.

"There's something therapeutic about filling these boxes and knowing that you're making a difference," Haley said. "Part of being able to understand what people feel is being able to volunteer services. What we want the people of Horry and Georgetown counties to know is that we've got your back, we're going to try and keep bringing these things to you."

Haley was joined by rep-

resentatives from almost three dozen local, state and federal agencies and organizations who were on hand to assist residents affected by the storm and the subsequent flood.

The one-stop event allowed residents to perform a variety of tasks at one location ranging from registering for financial assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to applying for disaster assistance loans with the U.S. Small Business Administration.

They could also receive food and cleaning supplies

as well as apply for food and financial assistance with the S.C. Department of Social Services, discuss insurance options with the S.C. Department of Insurance, learn about unemployment options through the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce, and receive free well water testing kits and

tetanus shots from the S.C. Department of Health and

Environmental Control.

"The goal is to bring all the resources to the people," Haley said.

One of the victims who met with Haley was Lee's Landing resident Lenore Letellier, who received a personal audience with the Governor for approximately 10 minutes.

After speaking with the Governor, Letellier used words like amazing, awesome and kind to describe Haley.

"I feel like it's only because of Governor Haley that we're here today," Letellier said. "She made it happen. If it hadn't been for her, I don't feel like this would be taking place."

Letellier said she felt forgotten in the days and weeks after the hurricane, and shared her story with the Governor in hopes that no one in the future will have to endure what she did.

"She mostly listened to what I was saying," Letellier said. "She said she was so sorry that happened.

She wanted to know what she could do to help and I said don't let this happen again. It restores my faith a little bit."

Although the flood waters never got into her home, Letellier said she was without electricity for three and half weeks and actually saw looting in her neighborhood. She never saw any patrol boats, she said, and felt helpless and frustrated for days on end.

"We had no help," she said. "Nobody came. The only people who helped us was the Red Cross. They were phenomenal. The frustration you go through is phenomenal. You have to go to survival mode because you have no choice. We all felt like we were being punished because we didn't evacuate."

Debra Booth traveled from Loris to attend Friday's event. She lost a lot of food when the electricity went out and was grateful for the assistance.

"This helps a lot," she said.

Title: **Haley lends a helping hand and sympathetic ear**  
Author: BY ROBERT ANDERSON ROBERT.ANDERSON@MYHORRYNEWS.COM  
Size: 73.00 column inches  
Conway, SC Circulation: 6250



ROBERT ANDERSON / THE HORRY INDEPENDENT

**Governor Nikki Haley chats with Carl Benton during a stop at the Conway Recreation Center this past Friday.**

Title: **Percentage turnout lower among York County, Chester County voters**  
 Author: BY DAVIDTHACKHAM dthackham@heraldonline.com  
 Size: 69.28 column inches  
 Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688



## DECISION 2016

# Percentage turnout lower among York County, Chester County voters

BY DAVID THACKHAM

dthackham@heraldonline.com

York, Chester and Lancaster county voters made their voices heard in record numbers on election night Tuesday, but officials say a lack of competitive local races and a divided presidential campaign were to blame for a dip in the percentage of voter turnout.

Although all three counties saw record numbers of actual ballots cast, both York and Chester counties recorded shrinking turn-

out percentages dating back to 2008.

In the race for president, Republican Donald Trump coasted to a 14-percentage-point victory in South Carolina over Democrat Hillary Clinton.

But the percentage of registered voters who came out to the polls dipped for the second straight general election for York (68.44 percent) and Chester (68.26 percent) counties. Both coun-

ties saw voter turnouts above 70 percent in 2012, and even higher numbers in 2008.

"There weren't a lot of races where anyone felt there was any real competition," said Terry Graham, Chester County elections director. "That played a part."

Outside of the presidential election, there were fewer reasons to get registered voters out to the polls, according to

Beth Covington with the York County Voter Registration and Elections Office.

"If you didn't have a strong opinion about the presidential race, it made it a lot easier to not show up and cast a ballot," she said. "When you have a ballot full of competition and know that if you go to the polls, you could make a difference in the out-

**SEE VOTERS, 8A**

## FROM PAGE 3A

# VOTERS

come, you're a lot more apt to come out and cast a ballot."

The only major local race was that in South Carolina's 5th Congressional District between U.S. Rep. Mick Mulvaney of Indian Land and Democratic challenger Fran Person of Tega Cay.

While Person was South Carolina's top-funded congressional challenger, Mulvaney romped to victory, picking up nearly 60 percent of the vote compared to Person's 38.75 percent.

Person's campaign was helped when his former boss, Vice President Joe Biden, came to Rock Hill twice. But Mulvaney's base was strong. He comfortably earned his third term thanks to a big turnout in York and Lancaster counties.

Mulvaney's margin of victory was "enormous" and represented a repudiation of U.S. President Barack Obama's two terms in office, according to Wes Climer, who won an uncontested race Tuesday for S.C. Senate District 15.

"Mulvaney just ran away with it," said Climer. "What's responsible for that is, he's accessible and he does what he says he's going to do."

In York County, with 167,053 registered voters, 114,331 ballots were cast, creating a voter turnout of 68.44 percent.

Below are a few races that were too close to call late Tuesday night before unofficial results were clear around midnight.

## FANNING DEFENDS SEAT FOR S.C. SENATE

### DISTRICT 17

Longtime educator Mike Fanning successfully won the race for S.C. Senate District 17.

Fanning, 49, received 53.27 percent of the vote compared to his Republican challenger and Iraqi war veteran Mark Palmer, who took 46.58 percent.

Senate District 17 includes part of York County, including southern Rock Hill and the area surrounding York, and all of Chester and Fairfield counties.

While Palmer squeaked out a narrow advantage in York County (9,837 to 9,791), Fanning was able to hold onto blue strongholds in Chester and Fairfield counties.

It was the second win at the polls for Fanning in about five months. Fanning unseated 16-year

incumbent Sen. Creighton Coleman of Winnsboro in the June Democratic primary runoff.

Palmer, 57, of York, recently received an endorsement from S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley, who said the U.S. Army National Guard veteran would be a "strong ally" in Columbia.

The State Law Enforcement Division confirmed earlier this month it is investigating claims that Fanning is accused of inappropriately touching a 16-year-old girl years ago while he was a teacher at Estill High School in Hampton County. Fanning has declined to respond to the charges.

Fanning lives near Great Falls. Palmer lives in York and works in Rock Hill. The state Senate term is four years.

Title: **Percentage turnout lower among York County, Chester County voters**  
 Author: BY DAVIDTHACKHAM dthackham@heraldonline.com  
 Size: 69.28 column inches  
 Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688

**SLIM MAJORITY APPROVES DOUBLED TERM LENGTHS FOR YORK COUNTY COUNCIL**

York County joined the majority of South Carolina in voting to approve doubled term lengths for its County Council members.

Voters narrowly approved the measure, with 50.62 percent voting “yes” on the referendum that will allow council members to serve for four-year terms instead of two.

Anderson County is now the only South Carolina county in which county council members serve two-year terms. Voters in that county defeated the

referendum with 57 percent voting against.

This was the first time since the late 1980s that York County voters had the chance to decide the council’s term lengths. Similar proposals were on the ballot in 1984 and 1988, and a draft ballot with a referendum was found for the 1980 election.

Although the county entertained discussion of the matter six years ago, it never reached the 2010 ballot.

Business leaders, local leaders and most of the County Council members themselves were in favor of the move, saying it was

helpful for new members to acclimate themselves to public service in a new role.

**COLE WINS OVER HAMMOND IN ROCK HILL SCHOOL BOARD RACE**

Windy Cole won the area’s lone contested school board race with a 56.39 percent majority over challenger Hank Hammond.

Cole won 3,506 total votes, compared to Hammond’s 2,688 votes.

David Thackham:  
803-329-4066,  
@dthackham

**2016 presidential election results from South Carolina**

Donald Trump/Michael Pence (Republican Party): 54.91 percent

Hillary Clinton/Tim Kaine (Democratic Party): 40.7 percent

“

**THERE ARE MANY BUSINESS-RELATED PROJECTS BEFORE THE COUNTY COUNCIL THAT NEED THE CONSTANT AND CONTINUOUS FOCUS OF OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS. THAT’S DIFFICULT ON A 2-YEAR CYCLE.**

*Rob Youngblood, president of the York County Chamber of Commerce*

Title: **Mostly empty school buses cost South Carolina \$1M in Matthew**  
 Author: The Associated Press  
 Size: 24.02 column inches  
 Florence, SC Circulation: 35092



# Mostly empty school buses cost South Carolina \$1M in Matthew

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — South Carolina spent nearly \$1 million sending 300 school buses to Charleston County on the coast during Hurricane Matthew to evacuate residents, but only 24 of the buses were used, state education records show.

And the only people who rode the buses to inland shelters were residents of a nursing home, according to information from the state Education Department obtained by The Greenville News.

Fuel for the buses, meals and hotels for the drivers and bus aides, the cost of a team from the state Forestry Commission and other expenses totaled \$954,779. State officials said they think federal disaster money should repay

much of that cost.

Some residents did go to North Charleston to get on the buses, but were directed to local shelters instead because of a rule that stated the buses couldn't be used until nearby shelters were at least half full.

Gov. Nikki Haley touted the buses for a few days after ordering evacuations along the coast as the hurricane threatened. Her spokeswoman, Chaney Adams, said she was relying on county information and the program will now be reviewed.

"When local requests for assistance come in, as the state prepares for a storm, we listen to the needs of local officials," Adams said. "In the aftermath of a storm, state officials always consider what worked and what didn't, and that in-

forms what can be handled better during the next state of emergency."

Hurricane Matthew killed five people in South Carolina, all connected to inland flooding from heavy rains. The storm killed 42 people in the U.S., over half of them in North Carolina, and more than 500 people in Haiti.

Hurricane Matthew was a Category 4 storm when the governor ordered evacuations, and officials had to take into account the possibility of a direct hit without any weakening, Education Department spokesman Ryan Brown said.

"It would have been a much worse situation had we been hit with a massive hurricane and not had enough buses there," Brown said.

Title: **Domestic violence review teams attend two-day workshop**  
 Author: BY JESSICA IMBIMBO Morning News jimbimbo@florencenews.com  
 Size: 42.62 column inches  
 Florence, SC Circulation: 35092



# Domestic violence review teams attend two-day workshop

## Committees analyze fatal cases, modify strategies

BY JESSICA IMBIMBO

Morning News

jimbimbo@florencenews.com

FLORENCE – The first Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee Workshop was held on Oct. 17 and 18 to help county and state officials identify trends in domestic violence deaths and improve prevention and intervention methods.

The third, fourth, and twelfth judicial court circuits' fatality review teams all attended the two-day

workshop hosted by the South Carolina Commission on Prosecution Coordination.

Each of South Carolina's 16 court circuits has established its own domestic violence fatality review committee consisting of law enforcement officials, prosecutors and victim advocates among others.

The domestic violence

fatality review teams were created as part of a law signed by Gov. Nikki Haley in March aimed at decreasing the number of people killed by domestic violence in the state. Prior to the passing of that legislation, South Carolina was one of just nine states that

did not have domestic violence fatality review committees.

According to the U.S.

surgeon general, domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women between 15 and 44 years

See **VIOLENCE**, Page 3A

## Violence

From Page 1A

old, more common than car accidents, mugging and cancer combined. Every minute, about 20 people are physically abused by intimate partners in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

According to the annual report "When Men Murder Women" by the Violence Policy Center, South Carolina is ranked fifth in the nation for the homicide of women by men. In 2014, South Carolina was ranked first. Since the report began 19 years ago, South Carolina has consistently ranked within the top ten nationwide for the number of women murdered

by men.

Ellen Hamilton, executive director of the Pee Dee Coalition, said the new legislation allowed these teams to form so officials can take a closer look at the domestic violence issue in the state and take steps to resolve it.

"It is a very extensive problem," Hamilton said. "We want to see South Carolina not even in the top ten and that is going to take everybody's efforts."

The Twelfth Judicial Circuit Fatality Review Committee consists of sheriff's deputies, SLED agents, coroners, solicitors and Pee Dee Coalition members in both Florence and

Marion counties.

Solicitor Ed Clements III and six other members of the Twelfth Circuit's review committee attended the workshop. Clements said the workshop outlined the responsibilities of the committee, including studying fatal domestic violence cases in order to prevent similar cases in the future.

"When there has been a death related to domestic violence, the prosecution is over with and no case is pending, then the review committee will study it," Clements said. "We look for holes in the system where if something had been done differently, we would've been more suc-

cessful in preventing the fatality from occurring."

To avoid obstructing investigation into ongoing domestic violence cases, the fatality review teams will look solely at closed cases. Clements said the workshop was very helpful and he is hopeful that this is the first of many steps toward reducing domestic violence statewide.

"We learned a lot," Clements said. "We talked about putting together protocols and procedures so we could comply with the statute. I could see where it could be very beneficial."

"We've got a long ways down the road but we've made a good start."

Title: **Unpaid sewer assessments rising**  
 Author: BY EILEEN KEITHLY ekeithly@southstrandnews.com  
 Size: 100.59 column inches  
 Georgetown, SC Circulation: 8446



# Unpaid sewer assessments rising

BY EILEEN KEITHLY

ekeithly@southstrandnews.com

They have gathered in their community and on the steps of the state capitol in protest of a yearly sewer tax that some residents in the Jackson Village community of Plantersville say is "illegal and racist," and, on Nov. 7, as a result of not paying the \$250 yearly sewer tax assessment, 25 Jackson Village property owners found their homesteads placed on the auction block during the Georgetown County Treasurer's delinquent tax sale.

The number of properties listed for sale has increased 400 percent since the first assessment was imposed in 2013, when five homes were auctioned off at the sale and never redeemed within the one-year time limit. Last year, the second year of the 20-year assess-

ment, seven homes were placed on the auction block, four of which were redeemed after owners paid their delinquent assessment fee, late fees, penalties and a percentage of the purchase amount paid by the bidder at the time of the auction.

Concerns about the assessments – and the delinquent tax sales that threaten to take homes and property over an unpaid \$250 bill – has been covered extensively by The Georgetown Times. Last month, a British Broadcasting Co. news crew came to Plantersville to document the story, as well.

For three consecutive weeks prior to the sale, the tax collector ran ads in the Georgetown Times listing the owners,

properties and locations of the property slated for sale. Georgetown County Deputy Tax Collector Cindy Lynch told the Georgetown Times that property owners could pay their delinquent taxes and assessments right up to the delinquent tax sale date, but there are penalties that are added to the amounts owed after the March 17 due date.

"Once the assessment is delinquent, property owners must pay the assessment and associated fees before they can pay their property taxes," Lynch said. "Between March 17 and May 1, a \$75 penalty is added to the total amount of taxes and assessments owed. After Oct. 1, an additional \$80 is added

Please see **SEWER**, Page 2A

## Sewer

from 1A

to the amount. Once the property is sold at public auction, the \$155 combined fee is attached to the amount owed.

Lynch said property redemption fees are calculated on a sliding scale, with 3 percent of the total bid price being the minimum amount paid within the first three months of the sale. Lynch further added, "The price increases by 3 percent every three months until the maximum redemption fee of 12 percent is reached."

County council chambers were filled to standing room only Nov. 7, as bidders gathered inside the old courthouse on Screven Street to place bids on delinquent tax property, mo-

bile homes and property slated for sale due to non payment of water or sewer assessment fees.

Bidders were required to register for free and obtain a bidding number. Bidding started at the combined amount of the delinquent tax, current taxes and title fees due, and proceeded in no less than \$100 increments. Bidders are required to make payment by 5 p.m. on the day of the sale by certified check or cash. If a tax payment is post marked prior to the sale date, bids are refunded without interest. Under state law, a taxpayer will have one year in which to redeem his or her property. During this time, the bidder will have no access to the property. Bidder money is held in escrow, and if

property is redeemed by the taxpayer, the bidder's money plus interest as provided by law will be returned.

According to officials within the treasurer's office, one of two things happen when a bidder places a bid during the tax sale. The taxpayer redeems the property from the tax collector within the one-year redemption period and the bidder is refunded as provided by law, or, the taxpayer fails to redeem the property within the one-year redemption period, and the bidder is issued a tax title to the property.

Lillian Milton, who scrambled to redeem her home last year after it was sold during last year's auction, said paying this year's

assessment was a "serious hardship," and although she was able, with the help of friends and family to pay the fee, she will continue to fight with other Jackson Village residents for "someone" to step in and help the community find a way to fight the yearly tax assessment.

"We have a group that has been meeting and trying to find a solution to this problem," Lillian Milton told the BBC. "I lost my house last year to the sale, and people might not think \$250 is a big deal, but to two people who are disabled and on a fixed income, that is a big deal. ...

"You have no idea how humiliating and debilitating it was for me to lose my home last year,

Title: **Unpaid sewer assessments rising**  
 Author: BY EILEEN KEITHLY ekeithly@southstrandnews.com  
 Size: 100.59 column inches  
 Georgetown, SC Circulation: 8446

and I am determined to not let my property be eaten up by a bunch of timber-hungry people who are waiting for me to not pay my assessment so they can move in and sweep my home out from underneath me.”

Spearheading a group of Jackson Village protesters is the Rev. Benjamin Grate, and he, too, said he believes that there is an underlying conspiracy at foot for real-estate companies to purchase property in Plantersville at a fraction of its value at the yearly tax sales when homeowners refuse or can't afford to pay the yearly fee.

“Look here, when this project first came to be, there was never any mention of a yearly fee,” Grate told the Times. “Then all of a sudden, the grant money that was supposed to pay for the sewer lines fell through, and the project went right along no matter how loud we screamed that we would not be able to afford that fee, and those of us who had perfectly good-working septic tanks did not want the sewer if it meant we had to pay that fee every year. ...

“It is so clear that there was an underlying current to put that sewer down here whether we wanted it or could afford it. ... How come only the black folks out here got the sewer shoved down their throats and the white folks on the road next to us didn't have to do away with

their septic tanks? Do you really think the ground is more stable closer to the river?”

After the South Carolina Department of Environmental Control dubbed the Jackson Village area as one of the top five sewage-critical-needs areas in the state, the Georgetown County Water and Sewer District launched a decade-long project in 2006 to rid the area of antiquated and failing septic tanks systems that DHEC said were leaking raw sewage onto properties, contaminating the community's drinking water and posing numerous health hazards to residents.

“DHEC came in here and picked out a few houses to look out and made their reports based on some and not all the homes in the area,” Milton said. “My family was in the septic-tank business, and I can assure you that our tank was not posing a health hazard to anyone. ...

“We didn't want that sewer, we never signed up for it, and we are still not connected to it and we have no intention of doing so.”

Lillian and her husband, George, said the assessor's office valued their home at \$46,000 last year, and their home was purchased at the delinquent

tax sale by Rowan Tree LLC for \$1,236 on the day of the auction.

Jackson Village resident Clif-

ton Grice has been protesting right along with the Milton family, Grate and dozens of others who oppose the assessment, and he said he crushed to find out his home had been sold at Monday's auction for non-payment of the sewer assessment fee.

Although Grice said he knew what would happen if he didn't pay his delinquent tax assessment by 10 a.m. the morning of the tax sale, he said it was a “hard blow” to know that he had lost his home because he couldn't afford to pay the fee.

“It really chokes me up to know that because I didn't have the \$250 to pay that fee, I have lost everything that has been passed down to me for generations,” Grice said. “All I can do now is hope and pray that somebody in Columbia listens to the Rev. Grate and somebody is willing to help us keep our homes, because I can tell you, it is getting harder and harder for people to scrape up that money out here to pay that fee. ...

“We are all family out here, and we help the other, but there is only so much money to go around, and when it's gone, it's gone, and if you are the last one to get help, you might just lose your house, just like me.”

Grate said it was Jackson Village residents like the Miltons and Grice that keep him working hard to find a solution

to the “crippling sewer tax assessment” that plagues many in Plantersville.

“We started out small, meeting at the community center in Plantersville, then we moved our protest to Columbia and finally got to speak to someone in the governor's office,” Grate said. “The BBC got wind of our fight and they came to see what we were going through and now the whole world will see. I have been working with the SC Commission for Minority Affairs, and we are scheduling a meeting for Nov. 11 to meet back up with Gov. Haley's policy analyst Hal Peters. ...

“We will not give up until we can get some help for the people in Plantersville who are suffering unjustly from this illegal sewer tax.”



EILEEN KEITHLY/SOUTHSTRANDNEWS

**Registered bidders fill out paperwork during the Nov. 7 delinquent tax sale.**

Title: **Unpaid sewer assessments rising**  
Author: BY EILEEN KEITHLY ekeithly@southstrandnews.com  
Size: 100.59 column inches  
Georgetown, SC Circulation: 8446



EILEEN KEITHLY/SOUTHSTRANDNEWS.COM

**The bidding was competitive at times during the Nov. 7 delinquent tax sale.**

Title: **Global spotlight**  
 Author: BY EILEEN KEITHLY ekiethly@southstrandnews.com  
 Size: 108.5 column inches  
 Georgetown, SC Circulation: 8446



# Global spotlight

## BBC documentary to highlight Plantersville sewer tax woes

BY EILEEN KEITHLY

ekiethly@southstrandnews.com

What started out as a local story in the Georgetown Times, about a group of Plantersville residents claiming that a yearly sewer tax assessment has unfairly led to homes and property being seized in public auctions, has gone international after the British Broadcasting Co. arrived in Georgetown earlier this week.

The arrival of the BBC may bring global awareness to a decade-long issue that many residents of the Jackson Village community say is robbing them of their homes and their heritage.

Veteran BBC broadcast journalist Brian Wheeler, along with BBC video journalist Anna Bressanin, arrived in Georgetown Wednesday, Oct. 26, to begin filming a documentary film and radio production, which was first spotlighted in a Georgetown Times' ongoing investigative series, originally titled "A Community in Crisis."

"Four years ago I did a story in Birmingham, Alabama, about a community that had been cut off from their water service," Wheeler told the Times. After he read the Plantersville story on the Georgetown Times' website, www.southstrandnews.com, he said he thought the story deserved a wider audience.

"I...thought to myself that this was something that was going on that needed some publicity," Wheeler said.

The Georgetown Times investigation revealed that since sewer service was completed in the Jackson Village area of the Plantersville community in 2014, problems have arisen, including charges of

racism and annual assessments, that some residents say they never asked for and can't afford.

In July, some Jackson Village residents gathered on the steps of the state Capitol to protest what many called a "racist" and "illegal" sewer tax assessment.

"We came here to bring awareness to our state lawmakers about the sewer tax that was unfairly and unjustly imposed on the people of Jackson Village," said the Rev. Benjamin Grate, the group's organizer at the Columbia event. After the protest, Grate met with Hal Peters, Gov. Nikki Haley's policy analyst.

"I thought we were going to make some progress after I met with Mr. Peters at the state house in Columbia," Grate said during an interview with the BBC Wednesday, "but I am so happy to see these folks from the BBC here... I think our story is going to finally be told and our South Carolina politicians won't be able to continue to turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to the people in Jackson Village."

In addition to the sewer tax situation, Wheeler said he also found himself wanting to know more about the possible eradication of the Gullah Geeche culture that thrives within the Jackson Village community.

"I knew nothing about the Gullah Geeche culture," he said. "I did a bit of research, and I thought that this is something that is going on that no one knows about."

During a second day of shooting on Thursday, Wheeler said he found many of the residents "shy" but warm and willing to talk about their plight to rid themselves of a "crippling"

sewer tax — and the possible extinction of a culture that, many told Wheeler, "they were taught to honor by their ancestors."

"I was quite keen on understanding and learning more about the Gullah Geeche culture," Wheeler said, "but it's heart breaking, actually, to listen to the residents speak about the possibility of losing their homes, and not being able to pass their land and their culture down to their grandchildren."

Having never visited South Carolina, Wheeler said he and Brassanin had no idea what the lay of the land would be, or the living conditions they would find in Jackson Village.

"You just don't know do you? When you are setting off to cover a story, what you will find," Wheeler said. "But we were really amazed at the sense of pride and ownership that is so obvious within Jackson Village."

"Just driving around, it's nice to see just how tidy, neat and well-kept the homes and properties are."

It was that sense of pride in ownership and the willingness of a community to fight for what they feel is rightfully theirs, Wheeler said, that made such an impact on him when he spotted the palatial plantation homes that line the river, just around the corner from Jackson Village.

"I thought I had prepared myself for the stark difference between the two," Wheeler said, "but to see it in the flesh, really brings it home to what they are up against, and it's really quite compelling, isn't it?"

Wheeler said the real-estate

signs in and around Jackson Village gave him a sense that the community was "under siege."

"The residents conveyed a sincere fear to us that the sewer tax was enabling the plantation owners and the timber companies to acquire their land and homes," Wheeler said. "When you are here, you really get a sense that the residents in Jackson Village are surrounded by the forces of development and they don't seem to have a lot that they can fight back with really."

On assignment from the United Kingdom, Wheeler is temporarily stationed at the BBC's Washington bureau for six months, while he films documentary features on American life.

"My day job back in the United Kingdom is hosting radio and online forums for news and politics," Wheeler said. "I'm here in the U.S. until March."

Brassanin, a seasoned video journalist, is stationed at the BBC's New York bureau.

"I normally do short documentaries, but my first movie came out six months ago," Brassanin said. "I'm very pleased to be able to film the video portion of Brian's story for him and we have gotten some amazing footage while we were here."

Wheeler said he will complete the remainder of his interviews by phone from Washington, and the release date for the film will be sometime in mid-November.

"This will get a wide variety of air time," Wheeler said. "We will run it on our news show, put it on the website and there will

Title: **Global spotlight**  
Author: BY EILEEN KEITHLY ekiethly@southstrandnews.com  
Size: 108.5 column inches  
Georgetown, SC Circulation: 8446

also be a radio spot, as well.

"As I'm sure you are aware, our stories air around the world."

Wheeler said the Plantersville documentary will air on BBC World News America; the organization's nightly news hour, and a text story, along with the documentary film will also air on the BBC's website. The story will also be broadcast on World Service Radio.



PHOTOS BY EILEEN KEITHLY/SOUTH STRAND NEWS

**BBC journalist Brian Wheeler interviews Plantersville resident Dody Carl Tucker Jr., while the Rev. Ben Grate looks on.**

Title: **Global spotlight**  
Author: BY EILEEN KEITHLY ekiethly@southstrandnews.com  
Size: 108.5 column inches  
Georgetown, SC Circulation: 8446



Jackson Village resident Luther Windley shows BBC video journalist Anna Bressanin the pump house that supplies water to his house.