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To:
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Subject: Morning Clips – Thursday, February 5, 2015

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Governor Nikki Haley News:

The State: SC Transportation Department requests \$5.5 million for building projects

<http://www.thestate.com/2015/02/04/3970056/sc-transportation-department-requests.html>

Cassie Cope

The state Transportation Department wants \$5.5 million in new state money next year, including money to pay for salt sheds, officials told a panel of House members Wednesday. The \$5.5 million requested is less than 1 percent of the \$1.5 billion-a-year in added money the department estimates it will need to maintain and expand the state's crumbling roads and bridges through 2040.

Note: Gov. Nikki Haley and lawmakers have proposed plans to get more money to the Transportation Department. Haley's plan includes lowering by 2 percentage points the state's income tax, which now has a top rate of 7 percent, over 10 years and increasing the gas tax by 10 cents a gallon during the next three years.

Post and Courier: Nominee to lead Social Services turnaround welcomes Senate's help

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20150204/PC1603/150209734>

Cynthia Roldan

A day after satisfying a small screening committee with her vision for leading the S.C. Department of Social Services, Susan Alford passed muster Wednesday with a larger group of senators. The Senate Full General Committee unanimously recommended that Alford, 60, be confirmed as DSS chief, sending her nomination to the full Senate.

Note: Alford, who formerly headed the Youth Learning Institute's Girl's Center at Clemson University, was nominated by Gov. Nikki Haley to replace Lillian Koller.

Note: Initially, some senators voiced dissatisfaction with Haley's selection, saying they had been excluded from the search for a new DSS director, while others questioned her qualifications.

Times and Democrat: Haddon House Food Products expanding Chester County operations

http://thetandd.com/business/haddon-house-food-products-expanding-chester-county-operations/article_c92deab6-acca-11e4-9382-e7d54d2ead2a.html

Haddon House Food Products, the largest privately-owned distributor, importer and exporter of specialty, natural, organic, ethnic and kosher foods, is expanding its Chester County operations. The company is investing \$4.6 million to expand its operations in Richburg. The investment is expected to create 55 new jobs.

Note: "It's always exciting when new businesses choose to come to South Carolina, but it's a real reason to celebrate when we see one of our existing companies like Haddon House Food Products make the decision to continue growing here. We congratulate Haddon House on announcing their second expansion in Chester County in only three years, and look forward to watching them succeed here for many years to come." –Gov. Nikki Haley

Horry News: Richardson, assistant solicitors sworn into office

http://www.myhorrynews.com/news/crime/article_07019316-ac98-11e4-978e-2f599750c6ab.html

Kathy Ropp

Fifteenth Circuit Solicitor Jimmy Richardson is a happy man. He loves his family, he loves his community and he loves his "dream job. He made all of this clear Thursday after taking the oath of office to serve as solicitor for another four years.

S.C. General Assembly News:

The State: S.C. lawmaker's husband ousts 16-year incumbent in court race

http://www.thestate.com/2015/02/04/3968844_sc-lawmakers-husband-ousts-16.html?rh=1#storylink=cpy

Jamie Self

The husband of an S.C. state representative ousted a 16-year incumbent in a contentious judge's race Wednesday. More than two dozen lawmakers, unhappy with the contest, abstained from voting. In one of 22 judicial seats that state lawmakers filled, the General Assembly voted 87-50 to elect Bill Funderburk, husband of state Rep. Laurie Funderburk, D-Kershaw, to a seat on the state's Administrative Law Court.

The State: Anti-Obamacare bill shelved in SC House

<http://www.thestate.com/2015/02/04/3969271/anti-obamacare-bill-tabled-in.html>

Andrew Shain

The latest effort to curb the White House-backed federal healthcare insurance law in South Carolina was put on hold Wednesday in the S.C. House. But proposals to bar state and local government employees and money from aiding with the Affordable Care Act, and to regulate navigators who assist people in signing up for insurance, could be revived in the state Senate.

Associated Press: SC House panel advances public records legislation

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=0gfm9Tyc

Seanna Adcox

Proposals aimed at ending governmental abuses of the state's open records law advanced Wednesday in the South Carolina House. Legislation sent to the full House Judiciary Committee would require government entities to respond more quickly to requests, bar them from charging excessive fees, and create a way to settle disputes quickly and cheaply.

Times and Democrat: Bill seeks coordinated anti-litter efforts in S.C.

http://thetandd.com/news/local/bill-seeks-coordinated-anti-litter-efforts-in-s-c/article_0147e3c0-acf8-11e4-9bf5-dfc2d5723bf5.html

Martha Rose Brown

A bill designed to clean up South Carolina's roads by improving coordination between agencies has passed the state House and is headed to the Senate. Bill sponsor Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter said it calls for a "comprehensive, collaborative approach to litter pick-up in our state."

Berkeley County Sheriff DeWitt Resignation:

Post and Courier: Berkeley County Sheriff Wayne DeWitt resigns; personnel records document past allegations

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20150204/PC16/150209699>

Andrew Knapp

Saying he had cast a cloud over his post as Berkeley County's sheriff, Wayne DeWitt resigned Wednesday, more than a month after his drunken driving arrest. DeWitt, who had served as sheriff for 20 years, had resisted community members' calls for him to step down after the ordeal Dec. 28, when his county pickup was seen speeding from a police car at 108 mph after he fled from a crash site.

Note: Haley accepted DeWitt's resignation and responded by writing in a letter that his "seat shall be filled in the manner according to law." She has the authority to appoint his replacement until a special election can be held.

Post and Courier: Palmetto Sunrise: Berkeley County sheriff resigns; Gov. Nikki Haley to name replacement

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20150205/PC1603/150209653>

Thad Moore

It falls to Gov. Nikki Haley to name Berkeley County's next sheriff after Wayne DeWitt tendered his resignation Wednesday following a December drunken driving arrest. In a short letter accepting his resignation, Haley didn't give an indication for who she might appoint to the job or when she'll make her decision. Chief Deputy Rick Ollic is serving as interim sheriff.

Opinion / Editorial Roundup:

Charlotte Observer: The teacher shortage

http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2015/02/04/5493779/the-teacher-shortage.html#.VNNp6mjF_4Y

Editorial

North Carolina is heading for a serious teacher shortage, judging by the number of students enrolled in UNC education programs. It's down 27 percent over four years. UNC system schools produce a large share of North Carolina public school teachers. The decline translates to thousands fewer classroom instructors. Where will they come from?

Note: In South Carolina, Republican Gov. Nikki Haley has proposed: tuition subsidies for college students who agree to teach for two years; help in paying college loans; financial support for teachers earning graduate degrees; and extra pay for teachers who agree to mentor younger colleagues. North Carolina should match those initiatives.

Times and Democrat: Pascoe is one to make decision in chief's case

http://thetandd.com/news/opinion/pascoe-is-one-to-make-decision-in-chief-s-case/article_96c76092-acc0-11e4-9b6c-038851e60ea1.html

Editorial

THE ISSUE: Murder case against Richard Combs; OUR OPINION: Solicitor would be good choice for U.S. attorney, but not before he makes call in difficult case. The intrigue surrounding the future of South Carolina U.S. Attorney Bill Nettles has particular significance in Orangeburg County and the 1st Judicial Circuit.

Post and Courier: DeWitt's overdue departure

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20150205/PC1002/150209660>

Editorial

Wayne DeWitt took the necessary, if overdue, step of resigning his position as Berkeley County sheriff on Wednesday. Arrested on Dec. 28 on charges of driving under the influence and leaving the scene of an accident, Mr. DeWitt refused to take a Breathalyzer test and acknowledged culpability in comments following the incident.

South Carolina News:

Associated Press: DSS: Long-overdue computer system will be finished in 2019

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

State Department of Social Services officials say the latest company hired to build a computer system for tracking deadbeat parents will complete its work in 2019, 22 years after the federal deadline. Meanwhile, federal fines continue. Katie Morgan, director of child support services, told a House panel Wednesday work should begin April 1 under the state's new contract with Xerox

Post and Courier: Port of Charleston deal with conservation groups praised by S.C. Senate committee

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20150204/PC1603/150209680>

Jeremy Borden

South Carolina senators praised Charleston port officials Wednesday for striking a \$5 million deal with environmental groups over the port's harbor-deepening project, avoiding a potentially expensive lawsuit and delays. "We would have spent a lot more than \$5 million (in court)," said Sen. Hugh Leatherman, the Senate president pro-tempore and a member of the Senate Transportation Committee.

Associated Press: State-owned utility to sell up to \$1.2 billion in bonds

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=752pTj2U

The state-owned utility Santee Cooper plans to sell up to \$1.2 billion in bonds next week to refinance debt and help pay for its part of new nuclear power units being built in Fairfield County. The Post and Courier of Charleston reported that the Moncks Corner utility will make a final decision on the size of the sale of bonds next week after it reviews available interest rates.

Times and Democrat: New S.C. State trustee says treat schools like businesses

http://thetandd.com/news/local/new-s-c-state-trustee-says-treat-schools-like-businesses/article_8fea8e6c-acf7-11e4-97fe-af4b8d152b4f.html

South Carolina State University's newest trustee says schools must be treated like businesses if they are to be successful. Following her election to the board Wednesday, Tammy Kelly said "We have to make sure we're growing from the standpoint of more children deciding to attend the university."

Index-Journal: Spearman discusses goals

<http://www.indexjournal.com/news/Spearman-discusses-goals>

Kate Hruby

State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman spoke to principals, instructional leaders and superintendents Wednesday morning to kick off a Western Piedmont Education Consortium principals' training. Before a packed room at Greenwood School District 50's Genesis Education Center, Spearman discussed her goals as superintendent and some of the pressing educational issues the state faces this year and in the future.

Island Packet: Deal with BJWSA is part of much-scrutinized service plan industry's move into South Carolina

http://www.islandpacket.com/2015/02/04/3574660_deal-with-bjwsa-is-part-of-much.html?rh=1#storylink=cpy
Zach Murdock

Largely unregulated service plan companies are making inroads in South Carolina through partnerships with public utilities, including one such company's recent deal with the Beaufort-Jasper Water and Sewer Authority, according to a new report by the Charleston City Paper.

The State: SC train wreck sparks criminal inquiry

<http://www.thestate.com/2015/02/04/3969846/sc-train-wreck-sparks-criminal.html>

Sammy Fretwell

Criminal investigators are trying to determine whether a Jan. 27 train wreck and chemical spill near Allendale was more than an accident. Authorities announced a \$10,000 reward Wednesday for the arrest and indictment of anyone responsible for the crash, which injured several people and evacuated an industrial plant in a rural section of the county about 90 miles southwest of Columbia.

The State: State correctional officer charged with assaulting former girlfriend turns himself in to Richland County authorities

<http://www.thestate.com/2015/02/04/3969153/man-who-assaulted-woman-turns.html#storylink=cpy>

A state correctional officer who police say forced his way into his former girlfriend's apartment earlier in January and assaulted her turned himself in to Richland County authorities Tuesday, officials say.

Local News:

Greenville News: Thurmond's biracial granddaughter on Tillman Hall: changing name 'won't change hearts'

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/pickens-county/2015/02/04/thurmonds-biracial-granddaughter-tillman-hall-changing-name-change-hearts/22898171/>

Ron Barnett

Monica Williams-Hudgens was a 12-year-old Black Panthers sympathizer who had formed the opinion that white people are "devils," when her mother decided it was time to tell her who her grandfather was. Not only was he white, but he was U.S. Sen. Strom Thurmond, one of the most vitriolic segregationists in the country.

National News:

Associated Press: US tilts toward arming Ukraine

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/US_UNITED_STATES_UKRAINE?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2015-02-04-21-46-24

Matthew Lee

The Obama administration is tilting toward sending arms to Ukraine to help it fight Russian-backed rebels as three Cabinet-level officials head to Europe for consultations with Ukrainian officials and NATO allies in Brussels, Kiev and Munich.

Reuters: Top Obama communications advisers to step down, leaving hole in staff

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/02/05/us-usa-obama-adviser-idUSKBN0L829020150205>

Jeff Mason

President Barack Obama's top two communications advisers plan to step down in the coming months, leaving a hole in his senior staff as the White House tries to keep attention on an ambitious agenda before the 2016 presidential campaign.

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