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To:
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The Post and Courier

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Thursday, December 31, 2015

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Charleston, S.C. \$1.00

Toppling barriers

First female justice and chief justice in S.C. 'made things happen' by paving way, tackling landmark cases, modernizing court system



South Carolina Chief Justice Jean Toal will end her tenure on Dec. 31 after 27 years on the Supreme Court.

BY CYNTHIA ROLDAN
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COLUMBIA — Jean Toal has spent her life pushing back boundaries.

A Columbia native, Toal became an attorney when less than 1 percent of the lawyers in the Palmetto State were women. And she tried cases when few women with law degrees actively practiced law.

Toal's former law partner, Jay Bender, recalled a 1970s case in which Toal sought to gain access to a school board budget meeting. After losing the case, the school board's attorney taunted her. "What are you going to do now, Jean?"

"She told the lawyer for the school board that she was going across the street and change the law," Bender said.

Toal, who's reached the state's mandatory retirement age of 72, will be leaving the South Carolina Supreme Court after 27 years. Toal was the first female justice when she was elected in 1988, and was the first female chief justice when she was elevated to the post in 2000.

She leaves a legacy of being involved in landmark cases and helping to modernize South Carolina's court systems.

"Everything she undertook she was the best at," said Alex Sanders, a retired judge and former College of Charleston president. "She didn't stand by and let things happen. She made things happen."

In the waning days of her final court term, Toal admits to feeling nostalgic, but excited to move on.

Please see **TOAL**, Page A4

Pleicones will retire after 1 year as new chief justice

BY MAYA T. PRAHBU
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COLUMBIA — Costa Pleicones will reach the pinnacle of his professional ambitions on Jan. 1, when he ascends to chief justice of the South Carolina Supreme Court after serving 16 years as a justice on the state's highest court.

But he'll only have a brief year in which to serve it.

Pleicones will be forced to step down when he reaches the mandatory retirement age of 72, the same as Jean Toal, the chief justice he'll be replacing. And not even being a leap-year baby can



Pleicones

change that. "Do I wish it would have been longer? Of course," he said. "I've been unable to convince anybody that since I was born on Feb. 29 I will only be 18 in 2016. That

particular appeal has not resonated with anyone yet."

Pleicones was born in Greenville and raised in Columbia.

Please see **PLEICONES**, Page A4

Trump in S.C. says he's not sexist

Defends attacks on Clintons, saying, 'We had to respond'

BY SCHUYLER KROPE
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HILTON HEAD ISLAND — Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump described the campaign as "war" as he defended bringing former President Bill Clinton's past into the 2016 race by saying Democratic rival Hillary Clinton had attacked him as the sexist one in the field.

"We had to respond to Hillary," he told a cheering crowd of more than 2,500 crammed inside a Westin resort ballroom on Wednesday. "She said this guy has demonstrated a penchant for sexism. Nobody respects women more than Donald Trump."

He also said that if he does not take the White House 11 months from now, his effort would have been worthless.

Please see **TRUMP**, Page A6

pc Video
To see a video from Donald Trump's appearance at Hilton Head, go to postandcourier.com/videos.

Web can speed up search for the missing

Police: Social media helping spread word

BY DAVE MUNDAY
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With the rise of social media, citizens are seeing more missing-person notices from police, sometimes within a few hours of when the person was last seen.

Contrary to popular belief, there's no waiting period for reporting a person as missing.

"Our detectives don't wait 48 hours before putting out a notice for a missing person," Charleston police spokesman Charles Francis said. "That hasn't changed through the years. People get that impression from television that you have to wait 48 hours before someone can be reported as missing. That's not the case for us."

The Charleston Police Department Field Guide for Missing Persons, which was last revised in 2011, defines a missing child as "any person who is under the age of 18 years, whose whereabouts are unknown to any parent, legal custodian or other person standing in loco parentis of the child, and who has been reported as missing to law enforcement."

Please see **MISSING**, Page A4

Inside



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Cosby charged with sex crime, released on \$1M bail. **A9**

SPORTS
College of Charleston freshman Marquise Pointer making an early impact. **C1**

BUSINESS
Building owner aims "to keep locals on King Street." **B1**

Chicago mayor plans reforms, more Tasers to reduce police shootings

BY SARA BURNETT
and MICHAEL TARM
Associated Press

CHICAGO — Mayor Rahm Emanuel said Wednesday that Chicago police must be better trained to distinguish between when they can use a gun and when they should use a gun, after a series of shootings by officers sparked protests and complaints that police are too quick to fire their weapons.

Emanuel announced changes in police training and department policies on use of force during a news conference. He also said the Police Department will double the number of Tasers available to officers — from 700 to 1,400 — as he works to restore public trust in the police force and his administration.

Please see **CHICAGO**, Page A4



Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel responds to a question during a news conference about new police procedures on Wednesday. Emanuel said every Chicago patrol car will be equipped with a Taser following a series of high-profile shootings by officers.



Showers:
High 74, Low 58.
Complete 5-day
forecast. **B1D**

Bridge B9 Crosswords B8, C10 Movies D13
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Charleston Deals today Integrative Wellness
\$79 for 1-hour couples
massage. See **A2**



VOICES, 10A

A LOOK BACK AT 2015



METRO, 3A
Rain
wreaks
havoc

The Greenville News

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THURSDAY,
DECEMBER 31, 2015
GREENVILLEONLINE.COM

USA TODAY CITIES AROUND THE WORLD ON NEW YEAR'S EVE ALERT PAGE 1B



CLEMSON VS. OKLAHOMA

4 p.m. on ESPN



Clemson will play Oklahoma in the Orange Bowl, at Sun Life Stadium in Miami Gardens, Fla., at 4 p.m. on ESPN.

BART BOATWRIGHT/STAFF

CLEMSON BEGINS PLAYOFF PURSUIT

SCOTT KEEPFER
SKEEPER@GREENVILLEONLINE.COM

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. - Typically, an Orange Bowl date would be a be-all, end-all for the Clemson football team.

This time around, it's simply the means to an end.

"The Orange Bowl has been pretty good to us these last two times," said senior guard Eric Mac Lain.

Now the Tigers are hoping the third time's truly a charm - a victory today against Oklahoma in the first game of the College Football Playoff would send the unbeaten and top-ranked Tigers (13-0) to the national championship game on Jan. 11.

Clemson, which is chasing its first and only national title since 1956, brings a 16-game winning streak - the longest active streak in the nation - into today's game at Sun Life Stadium.

"We want to make them print one more

"The Orange Bowl has been pretty good to us these last two times."

ERIC MAC LAIN
CLEMSON SENIOR GUARD

INSIDE

A trio of Clemson players are out for postseason. **Page 1C**

ticket to see the Tigers play," Clemson coach Dabo Swinney said.

No. 4 Oklahoma (11-1) is a four-point favorite, making Clemson an underdog - at least according to the oddsmakers - for the first time this season.

"I love it," Mac Lain said. "Whatever Vegas says is great, but Vegas isn't playing the game."

This Clemson team has traveled a long and challenging road to arrive on the cusp of immortality. With quarterback Deshaun Watson coming off knee surgery and major rebuilding jobs required on both the offensive and defensive lines, the general consensus was that the Tigers probably were a year away from greatness.

But the Tigers melded and matured in short order, and showed early mettle by prevailing in close wins against Louisville and Notre Dame. A victory against Florida State

See **PLAYOFF**, Page 5A

Transplant recipient to ride in parade

LIV OSBY
LOSBY@GANNETT.COM

After a lifetime of running, tennis and other sports, Miren Ivankovic found himself sidelined by a debilitating injury.



Miren
Ivankovic

"I couldn't run or anything of that nature," he said. "And at the very end ... I couldn't use my right leg anymore. I was on crutches."

But thanks to a transplant, he's back to sports and even participated in last year's Donate Life Transplant Games, winning six gold medals.

And come New Year's Day, the 49-year-old Anderson University economics professor will be the first Upstate resident, and just the third from South Carolina, to ride the Donate Life float in the 2016 Rose Parade.

"I was probably playing tennis, running or biking during the parade in previous years," he told *The Greenville News*. "This time, I'll be part of it."

See **PARADE**, Page 4A

Proposed coal ash dump faces opposition

Pickens County residents are against the plan

RON BARNETT
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Residents and the Pickens County Legislative Delegation are voicing opposition to a plan to bring thousands of tons of coal ash to a dump near Liberty and the County Council put a resolution on the issue on the agenda for its meeting Monday.

The Pickens County Legislative Delegation sent a letter to the state Department of Health and Environmental Control opposing the dumping of coal ash at a site near Liberty, state Sen. Larry Martin said.

The project would "bring into Pickens County a waste that is not generated here and has broad environmental concerns for all of our citizens," the letter to DHEC Director Catherine Heigel

See **COAL ASH**, Page 4A

INSIDE

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16 things to know for ringing in 2016 at **Famously Hot New Year**, Go Columbia



S.C. Year in Pictures as seen by The State's photographers, Palmetto

THURSDAY DECEMBER 31 2015

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YESTERDAY: HI 76 LO 66 PRECIP. 0.92"
FORECAST: D.C.

The State



NO. 1 CLEMSON



NO. 4 OKLAHOMA

5

ORANGE BOWL STORY LINES

1. WILL EITHER TEAM HAVE A MENTAL EDGE?

Oklahoma players said they have reviewed tape of last year's game several times over the past few weeks and listened to commentators berate their play. They have vowed to be more focused and more determined after being embarrassed by Clemson 40-6 last year. Still, it's hard to imagine the Tigers won't be ready to play as well with a spot in the national title game on the line. Clemson coach Dabo Swinney said sending three players home from the bowl two days before the game does not cause any type of distraction. It remains to be seen whether or not he is right.

2. RUNNING GAMES ARE BEING OVERLOOKED

Most of the talk in Miami this week has been about Clemson quarterback Deshaun Watson and Oklahoma signal caller Baker Mayfield. The two finished third and fourth in Heisman voting but were also helped out by strong running games. The Sooners duo of Samaje Perine and Joe Mixon have accounted for more than 2,000 yards and 22 touchdowns. Clemson relies on Wayne Gallman and Watson to get the job done on the ground. Watson has 887 rushing yards, while Gallman sits at 1,332, needing 14 yards to break the Clemson single season record.

The final four

SEMIFINALS

No. 1 Clemson (13-0) vs. No. 4 Oklahoma (11-1)
Thursday, Orange Bowl, Miami Gardens, Fla., 4 p.m.

No. 2 Alabama (12-1) vs. No. 3 Michigan State (12-1)
Thursday, Cotton Bowl, Arlington, Texas, 8 p.m.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP GAME
Jan. 11, 8:30 p.m., Glendale, Ariz.

TV: All games on ESPN

4. WILL THE CROWD BE A FACTOR?

Clemson has had a significant crowd advantage in its three biggest games of the season leading up to this point. The Tigers faced Notre Dame and Florida State at home and played North Carolina in Charlotte in a stadium that was at least 80 percent orange. The Tigers have used the emotion from the crowd to their advantage in big games this year and should have a decisive edge in the Orange Bowl. Sooners coach Bob

CUTS HAVE TAKEN TOLL

DHEC seeks more funds for water monitoring

BY SAMMY FRETWELL
sfretwell@thestate.com

The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control is seeking nearly \$1 million next year to expand its water-quality monitoring program, which critics say has become so threadbare that regulators are having trouble determining how clean rivers and lakes really are.

DHEC officials say the money is needed to help restore the water-monitoring program after years of budget cuts. If the money is approved by the Legislature, the agency says it will check the quality of some rivers and streams more often. The state now checks many only six times a year.

"This funding request will allow us to sample every month," DHEC director Catherine Heigel recently told a House budget subcommittee.

SEE WATER, 6A

LOCAL

THEY MADE A DIFFERENCE

Some Midlands residents who didn't make headlines - but made a mark within their communities - died in 2015. We pay tribute to some of them. 3A

LOCAL

SCE&G OPENS SPILLWAY AT LAKE MURRAY OVERNIGHT

Release was due to "significant upstream inflows." ALSO: Riverwalk Park and Amphitheater and local roads closed, 7A

SPORTS

STILL PERFECT

No. 24 USC
Men's basketball team now 12-0 after beating





Music, awards highlight 2015 in Aiken area
Living on the Go, 1C



A year of success and departure
Sports, 1B

Aiken Standard

YOUR LOCAL NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1867

THURSDAY, December 31, 2015

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Chance of flooding, heavy rain expected in County

BY DAN BROWN
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The streak of active weather that has plagued Aiken County since Christmas is expected to end by the weekend, but not before it gives the area a final soaking that could produce some flooding in Aiken and Edgefield counties.

As of 4:32 p.m., the National Weather Service in Columbia issued a flood watch through Thursday for several counties in central South Carolina, including Aiken and Edgefield counties, as the weather system that has wreaked havoc on the Mississippi River basin plows eastward leaving high water in its wake.

Aiken and Edgefield counties are among 17 South Carolina counties included in the flood watch. Localized heavy rainfall will continue through tonight with accumulations between 1 to 2 inches possible, according to the National Weather Service.

The heavy rainfall will combine with already saturated soil conditions from previous rainfall this week, plus river and lake levels near or at full capacity to produce flooding, according to the National Weather Service flood watch.

Also, once the rain heads out on New Year's Day, with many rivers and lakes at, or near, flood stage, new and worsening flooding can be expected along rivers and lakes later this week.

Whitney Smith, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Columbia, said the problem isn't just with the rain that falls, but the rain that had fallen earlier in the week.

"Most of our rivers are at full capacity already, so it won't take much to cause river levels to rise and crest," Smith said. "Local residents should be watchful of local rivers and streams, and pay attention to rising water levels."

Smith said the rain will continue through Friday and New Year's Day, with the chance of rain decreasing after Thursday night.

"Locally, some areas could get between an inch and an inch and a half of rain," Smith said. "The main concern with this rainfall is heavy rain."

By Saturday, more seasonal temperatures are forecast with clearing skies and highs reaching the low 50s.

Please see RAIN, Page 12A

AREA DEATHS

Emethel Allen, Aiken
Loretta Lavender, Lexington
Ruth Marie Livingston, Williston
William Otis Anderson, Graniteville
Deaths and Funerals, 6A

WEATHER



No. 1 - Pictured, from left, are Aiken County School District Superintendent Dr. Sean Alford, Aiken City Manager John Klimm and Aiken Mayor Rick Osborn.



No. 4 - An honor guard from the South Carolina Highway Patrol lowers the Confederate battle flag as it is removed from the Capitol grounds in Columbia on July 10.



No. 5 - During its Oct. 26 meeting, Aiken City Council approved a building height ordinance increase from 50 feet to 55 feet.

Top stories of 2015

New leaders, floods lead in this year's list

STAFF REPORTS
editorial@aikenstandard.com

This year's top local news stories captivated readers not just on the local level, but the state and national level as well.

From the election of Aiken's first new mayor in 24 years to the relocation of the Confederate battle flag on the South Carolina Statehouse grounds to the fight to gain access to video footage reportedly showing a police officer fatally shooting an unarmed man, Aiken Standard staffers chased down leads and uncovered details to keep readers informed.

Today, the Aiken Standard completes its countdown of the Top 10 Local Stories of the Year with stories five through one.

Stories 10 through six appeared in the Dec. 30 edition of the paper and are also available at www.aikenstandard.com.

No. 5 - Building height ordinance

What could be the single most significant vote in recent years for downtown Aiken occupied City Council's time and efforts through the latter part of 2015.

During its Oct. 26 meeting, Council approved a building height ordinance increase from 50 feet to 55 feet, which stood to benefit Hotel Aiken and its proposed renovations.

In July, downtown hotel owner Neal Shah presented the Aiken Planning Commission with plans to renovate the historic hotel. In so doing, the height of the \$10 million renovation investment would reach close to 75 feet, requiring the city to amend its maximum allowable height ordinance from 50 feet to 75 feet.

The Planning Commission recommended approval and Council approved the first of two votes in July; but, in the face of intense public opposition, Council

In September, Shah returned with revised plans and a request to amend the maximum height ordinance from 50 feet to 55 feet, which was later approved by Council.

"An increase of 30 inches," said City Manager John Klimm during the Sept. 28 meeting, producing a stick to use as a visual aid. "About the size of this stick, is what the actual increase of the Hotel Aiken's height would be."

Shah hopes Hotel Aiken will bring more jobs, more visitors, more shoppers, more diners, and in turn, inject more money into downtown Aiken's pockets, said Joseph Von Nessen, Ph.D., research economist with the University of South Carolina, in a report prepared for the Aiken Downtown Development Association.

"A total investment impact will inject an estimated \$11.7 million into Aiken's economy, according to the Aiken Downtown Development Association's report," he said.

The Hotel Aiken remains in the design phase with Shah planning in early 2016 to present his plans to the City's Design Review Board. Construction should take about 12 months.

No. 4 - Confederate flag comes down in S.C.

The controversy over the Confederate flag being flown on the South Carolina Statehouse grounds in Columbia had been simmering for years, but the state's leaders seemed determined to keep it in its place of honor even though it offended some people.

Then something horrible happened. At the historic Emanuel AME Church in Charleston in June, lone gunman Dylan Roof shot and killed nine people in a church during a Bible study, including Rev. Clements Pinckney.



No. 2 - An overflowing McTier Creek washed away this part of Cumbee Trail Road in the Ridge Spring-Monetta area after heavy rains in October.

Some defended it as a symbol of Southern pride, but there also was a growing sentiment that the flag represented racial hatred.

S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley spoke out, saying the Confederate flag needed to come down and urged state lawmakers to take action.

The S.C. Senate voted 36-3 to remove the Confederate flag. Sen. Tom Young, R-Aiken, Sen. Shane Massey, R-Edgefield, and Sen. Nikki Setzler, D-Lexington, whose district includes a portion of Aiken County, all supported that legislation.

In the S.C. House, there was a long debate that lasted well into the night, but the bill finally passed. The result of the second and final vote was 94-20.

Rep. Bill Clyburn, D-Aiken, and Rep. Don Wells, R-Aiken, voted yes. Rep. Chris Corley, R-Graniteville, and Rep. Bill Taylor, R-Aiken, voted no. Rep. Bill Hixon, R-North Augusta, wasn't present.

Haley signed the legislation on July 9, and the flag came down the following day during a 6-minute ceremony. A multiracial honor guard of South Carolina troopers wearing dress-gray uniforms and white gloves carefully folded and rolled it up. Then the banner was taken to the state's Confederate Relic Room.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

See which stories from 2015 were named to the Aiken Standard's honorable mentions list, 12A

showed the Confederate flag flying on the Statehouse grounds, with a message inside the card that read: "May your Christmas be filled with memories of a happier time when South Carolina's leaders possessed morals, convictions and the principles to stand for what is right. May you have a blessed Christmas, and may you take this joyous time as an opportunity to ask for forgiveness of all your sins such as betrayal."

Plans call for a new display to be built for the Confederate flag in the Relic Room. Corley, however, wants to revive the discussion about the banner's fate.

In early December, he pre-filed a bill that, if passed, would give voters an opportunity to decide if the Confederate flag should go back up.

Corley wants to see the following question on a ballot: "Do you favor flying the South Carolina Infantry Battle Flag of the Confederate States of America at its former location in 2015 adjacent to the Confederate Soldier Monument on the grounds of the State Capitol Complex together with the names

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2 SECTIONS, 18 PAGES

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2015

DAILY 75¢, SUNDAY \$1.50

Flooding leads to evacuations for some residents

By DAMIAN DOMINGUEZ
ddominguez@indexjournal.com

For the second time this month, residents of the Wilson Creek neighborhood were evacuated because of heavy rains.

Flood waters pooled and rushed over a road in the neighborhood Wednesday as buses and trucks carried evacuees away from their homes, the rising waters the result of a heavy

downpour drenching the area with 2 inches of rain in a three-hour span.

The region was under a flash flood warning for much of Wednesday, according to the National Weather Service, while a flood watch declared Monday ends at 7 a.m. today.

At about 1 p.m., county firefighters were evacuating people from the Wilson Creek neighborhood. Residents were transported out in trucks

and buses, being taken to a shelter at Main Street United Methodist Church. The American Red Cross is providing evacuees safety, meals and a dry place to stay, according to a news release.

"If it keeps raining, it will only get worse," said Callison Fire Chief Benny Leopard during the evacuation. "It's come up a good three inches since I got here."

At Main Street United Methodist,

18 people from Wilson Creek had taken shelter with the Red Cross by 3:45 p.m. One volunteer, Earl Wright, said many of the people taking shelter had been there before, during previous storms.

"When people are here, all they want to hear about is home," he said.

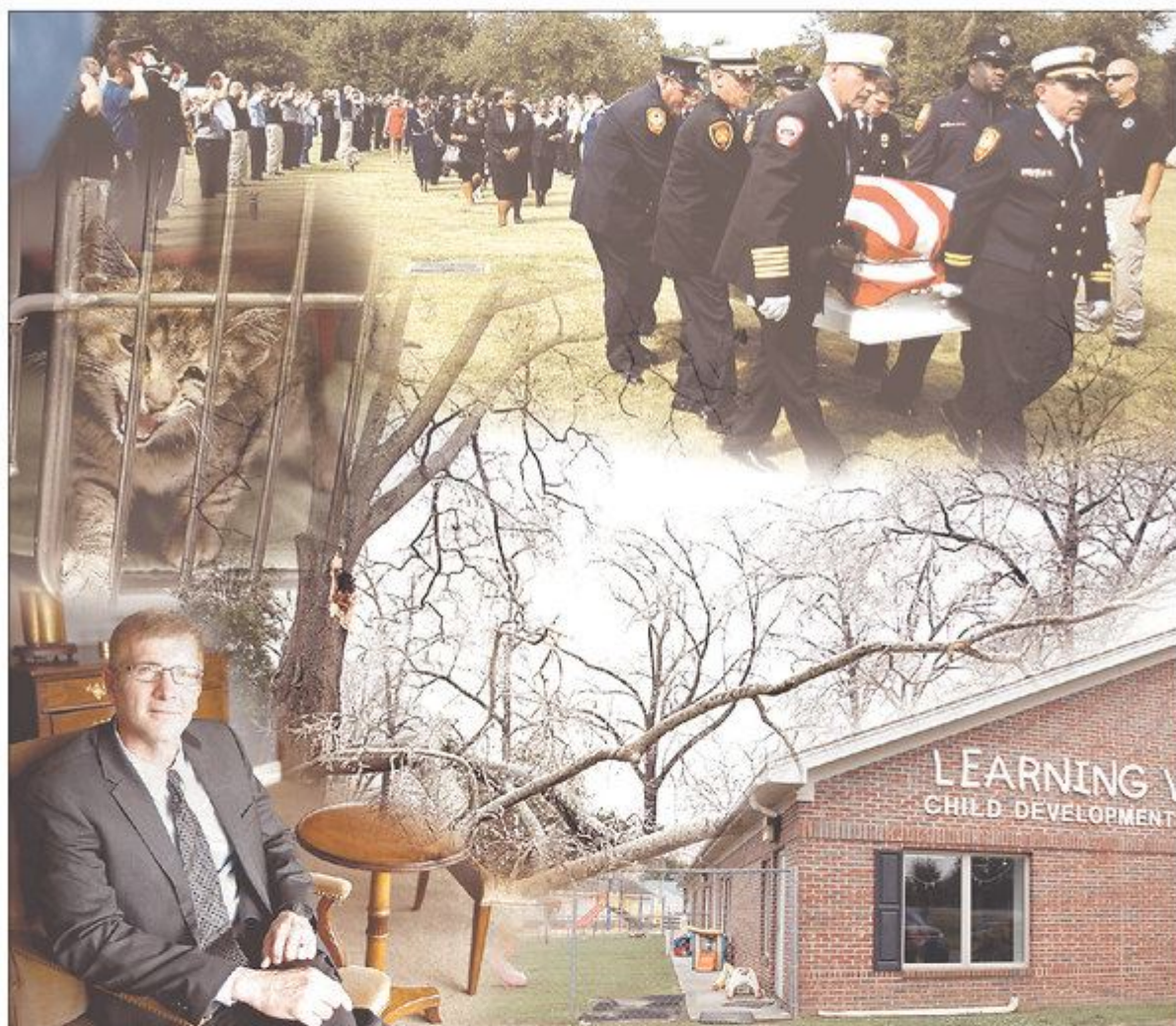
The church has offered space for Red Cross shelters multiple times.

See **FLOODING**, page 4A

Want more photos?

See 4A or visit IndexJournal.com for more photos of area flooding.

2015: DAYS GONE BY



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Greenwood Fire Department officers carry Ben Terry Jr.'s casket Sept. 21 in Greenwood. Half a tree remains standing after a large, frozen branch fell Feb. 17 on the Lander University campus because of an ice storm that hit the Lakelands. The Learning Vine on Overland Drive in Greenwood was working with the Department of Health and Environmental Control in June to find the source of possible cases of Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* infection. Lander University President Richard Cosentino sits in his office July 7 in Greenwood. A feral cat meows inside the confines of the Greenwood Animal Shelter on May 29 in Greenwood.

INDEX-JOURNAL FILE PHOTOS



SKERJANZ NAMED TOP PREP BOYS SWIMMER

SPORTS, B1



SING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH GOSPEL

ESCAPE, D1

Herald-Journal

SPARTANBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA

Thursday, December 31, 2015



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TODAY **FRI** **SAT**

 66°/47° 55°/33° 52°/30°
 Complete forecast, B8

UPSTATE



Program sparks friendship

An outreach program that provides fire safety information to Spartanburg residents has created a special bond between one woman and a group of firefighters. **C1**

DHEC seeks funds to check water

The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control is seeking nearly \$1 million next year to expand its water quality monitoring program, which critics say has become threadbare. **C1**

NATION & WORLD



Cosby charged in sex assault

Bill Cosby was arrested Wednesday and charged with a decade-old sex crime after a barrage of accusations from dozens of women made a mockery of his image as TV's wise and understanding Dr. Cliff Huxtable. **A3**

'Affluenza' teen's deportation delayed

The Texas teenager known for using an "affluenza" defense in a fatal drunken-driving accident likely won't return to the U.S. anytime soon because of a Mexican judge's decision.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF

Style points

Opposing QBs are
both dual threats

By Eric Boynton
eric.boynton@shj.com

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — Oklahoma starting quarterback Baker Mayfield knows a thing or two about taking the road less traveled to stardom. Meanwhile, his counterpart, Deshaun Watson, had the red carpet rolled out and ready long before he even arrived on Clemson's campus.

Those diverse paths will converge today in the biggest game of their young lives, with

More in sports

Shaq Lawson wants to bring a national title to Clemson before jumping to the NFL. **B1**
 Swinney says suspensions won't be a distraction for Tigers. **B3**
 Five players to watch for Clemson and Oklahoma. **B3**

the top-ranked Tigers and No. 4 Sooners playing the first of two College Football Playoff semifinals at the Orange Bowl. The winner advances to play the late game survivor between No. 2 Alabama and No. 3 Michigan State.

Mayfield went from walk-on



Oklahoma quarterback Baker Mayfield throws during practice Sunday. GASTON DE CARDENAS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Clemson quarterback Deshaun Watson throws during practice Monday. JOE SKIPPER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

to starter at two different schools, sitting out last season at Oklahoma after transferring from Texas Tech. It's a nearly unheard of feat, especially when you consider Mayfield's performance this season.

He was named Sporting

News Player of the Year and was selected to numerous All-America teams after completing 243 of 354 passing for 3,389 yards with 35 touchdowns and only five interceptions.

SEE FOOTBALL, A5

SATURATION POINT

Storms put Upstate THROUGH THE WRINGER

Rain to move
out of area after
near-record
drenching

By Allison M. Roberts
allison.roberts@shj.com

Everyone looking for a reprieve from the constant rainfall could soon get their wish.

"There are a couple of showers here and there, but it looks like the heavy rainfall is moving out," said Lauren Visin, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service at Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport.

Upstate residents can expect maybe a tenth of an inch during the next 24 hours, Visin said Wednesday night.

Doug Bryson, Spartanburg County's emergency management coordinator, said Wednesday's rain caused rivers, streams and creeks





SPORTS Oklahoma, Clemson took different paths to playoff. **Page 1D**

Morning News

THURSDAY DECEMBER 31, 2015

The Voice of the Pee Dee

TODAY'S WEATHER

Mostly cloudy, showers around; warm.
High 72, low 52.
DETAILS 2A

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Deadline set for disaster relief

BY JESSICA IMBIMO
Morning News
jimbo@florencenews.com

FLORENCE — The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Small Business Association are offering financial assistance for those affected by the historic flooding in October. The deadline to apply for federal disaster relief is Jan. 4.

To receive grant assistance from FEMA, South Carolina residents must register by Monday, Jan. 4. That is also the deadline for returning loan applications to the SBA. As of Dec. 27, the state had received a total of \$78 million in individual assistance from FEMA as well as over \$119 million in low-interest loans from the SBA.

FEMA media relations manager Kurt Pickering said individual assistance is different from public assistance because it is distributed on a government-to-government basis.

"The federal government gives money to state governments, and then it's passed onto localities for debris removal and things like that," Pickering said.

FEMA individual assistance benefits households by giving grant money to families during a disaster to help on a short-term basis. According to FEMA, assistance can include money for temporary rental assistance, essential home repair,

See **RELIEF**, Page 3A

The Watch Night Service

A tradition among some African-American churches

BY SHAMIRA MCCRAY
Morning News
smccray@florencenews.com

FLORENCE — The Watch Night Service, or Freedom's Eve, in black churches dates back to Dec. 31, 1862. For slaves, it was a night of hope, anticipation and praying for their freedom. It has since become a tradition for many congregations.

"On that night, black slaves gathered," said the Rev. Henry B. Peoples, pastor of Zion Canaan Missionary Baptist Church in Timmonsville, and moderator for the Pee Dee Baptist Association. "They came together in churches and private homes waiting for news that the Emancipation Proclamation had become law."

President Abraham Lincoln issued the proclamation on Jan. 1, 1863, during the Civil War.

According to the National Archives and Records Administration, the proclamation declared that all peo-



Jalen McPherson, 12, puts basketballs back on the rack after varsity teams warm up during the Pepsi Carolina Classic on Wednesday.

Coming to a close



Caleb Howell, 9, of Florence, shoots a free throw Wednesday afternoon during halftime of the Johnsonville and Florence Christian game at West Florence as part of the Pepsi Carolina Classic. Hope Health, one of the sponsors of the tournament, has been hosting halftime games for attendees.

Just five more games left to play during the Pepsi Carolina Classic after Wednesday's round of boys' varsity basketball games. The championship game will be played at 6:15 p.m. today at West Florence High School. See Sports coverage on **Page 1D** and photo galleries at snow.com.

Pepsi Carolina Classic

Today's games at West Florence High School

- » 11:15 a.m.: Hartsville vs. Lake City
- » 1 p.m.: Hannah-Pamplico vs. Hemingway
- » 2:45 p.m.: Trinity-Byrnes vs. Cheraw
- » 4:30 p.m.: South Florence vs. North Augusta
- » 6:15 p.m.: Crestwood vs. West Florence

Courtney Graham among those who died this year

Eighth in a nine-part series

BY SHAMIRA MCCRAY
Morning News
smccray@florencenews.com



FLORENCE — Courtney Graham was among the extensive list of prominent Pee Dee people who died in 2015. She died June 25 after an illness.

Graham was a mother, wife and devoted servant of God. In addition to the many other activities she was involved in, Graham was recognized in the community as the chief executive of Shelter and Nutrition for All Children (SNAC), a non-profit organization she started with a couple of members from a Bible



Harwell Jobe Nettles

SNAC's mission is to decrease the number of homeless, indigent and hungry children enrolled in Florence School District One. Graham served the homeless through SNAC, and also through a parking lot mission behind HopeHealth where she and her son Cade would help feed the homeless on Saturday mornings.





The Beaufort Gazette

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beaufortgazette.com

Established in 1897 75 cents

Officials: Child playing with lighter burns home

A Beaufort man was able to escape unharmed with a 5-year-old and a 15-year-old living in the home.

By **CAITLIN TURNER**
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A Beaufort family is homeless after a 5-year-old was playing with a lighter Wednesday morning, officials say.

Burton firefighters responded to a mobile home on Kennedy Circle around 9:30 a.m. and could see smoke from blocks away, according to a Burton Fire District news release.

The home was engulfed with

"heavy volumes of fire" that also spread to neighboring residences, the release said.

Burton firefighters, assisted by the Beaufort Fire Department and the Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort Fire Department, were able to confine the fire to the mobile home, but a neighboring home and vehicle were damaged by the heat.

The flames were put out within 15 minutes of firefighters' arrival, the release said.

The fire reportedly began when a 5-year-old was playing with a lighter in the rear room of the residence.

A man in the home heard a noise and went to investigate. The fire "exploded" when he opened the

room's door, the release said.

The man was able to escape unharmed with the 5-year-old and a 15-year-old living in the home. The family's name was not released.

The Burton Fire District reminds homeowners to keep lighters and matches out of the reach of children, to educate them on fire dangers and to check smoke detectors regularly.

The family did not have insurance, and the home was destroyed, the release said.

The American Red Cross has been notified to assist them.

Follow reporter Caitlin Turner at twitter.com/Cait_F_Turner.



Burton Fire Department

A mobile home on Kennedy Circle in Beaufort was destroyed in a Wednesday morning fire.

CAMPAIGN STOP ON HILTON HEAD ISLAND

TRUMP SLAMS BUSH, CLINTON



WHAT HE SAID

The ever-quotable Donald Trump dropped a series of funny or over-the-top sound bites Wednesday on Hilton Head. Here's a sampling:

"If I get elected, we're going to win a lot. We're going to win so much you're all going to get sick and tired of winning. You're going to say, 'Oh, no, not again!' I'm only kidding; you'll never get tired of winning." (A line Trump uses at almost every rally now.)

"So (President Barack) Obama's talking about global warming, but a lot of it's a hoax. It's a moneymaking industry; it's a hoax."

Obama's "got a problem with the carbon footprint. You can't use hairspray! Because hairspray is going to affect the ozone. ... They don't want me to use hairspray; they want me to use the pump ... and then it comes out in big globs, right? And then it's stuck in your hair, and you say, 'Oh my god, I've got to take a shower again.' I want to use hairspray!"

"You think (Islamic State fighters') wives don't know what's going on? You think their kids don't know exactly what Daddy's doing, when Daddy's going to fly into the World Trade Center?"

"When I'm saying we're going to build a wall, most of (the other candidates) say, 'You can't build a wall.' In China, 2,000 years ago, they built the Great Wall of China, which is bigger than any wall we're

Brian Symmes

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