

METRO

LOCAL / STATE
Former senator
expected in court

Former Sen. Robert Ford is expected in court on eight charges that include misconduct in office, forgery and ethics violations. State prosecutors say a hearing has been scheduled for the Charleston Democrat on Wednesday in Columbia. Last month, Attorney General Alan Wilson said Ford had been indicted on misconduct in office, forgery and six Ethics Act violations. Wilson says Ford improperly benefited from his public office by using campaign money for personal use, then filing false campaign reports and submitting forgeries to the Senate Ethics Committee. — AP

Commander of Coast Guard removed

The commander of Coast Guard operations in South Carolina and Georgia has been removed. Capt. Ric Rodriguez was relieved Monday from Coast Guard Sector Charleston. Coast Guard spokeswoman Marilyn Fajardo told local media outlets that the commander of the Coast Guard's 7th district removed Rodriguez because of a loss of confidence in his ability to lead. Fajardo said district leadership concluded a preliminary inquiry November 19 regarding Rodriguez and undisclosed allegations threatening his career. Officials said no charges are expected to be filed. Rodriguez has been reassigned to Coast Guard Atlantic Area Command in Portsmouth, Virginia.

Help sought in catching mail thieves

The Lexington Police Department is asking for the public's help to solve several mail thefts in town. Around 10:30 a.m. Monday, witnesses saw someone in a four-door turquoise colored vehicle remove mail from a mailbox. An investigation found that the unknown person or persons have approached numerous mailboxes that had the flag raised and removed the mail. The witness was not able to provide other details. Police suggest that residents shred or destroy unwanted documents with personal information; remove mail promptly from your mailbox; and deposit any envelopes or parcels with checks, money orders or gift cards in U.S. Postal Service collection boxes rather than leaving them in your mailbox for carrier pickup. — AP

Victim in single-car crash identified

Richland County Coroner Gary Watts has identified the person killed early Monday morning in a single-vehicle crash in Lower Richland. Tuan Myers, 36, was the only occupant of the vehicle that overturned during the crash, which happened around midnight Monday on Congaree Road near Goodwin Road, Watts said. Myers was not wearing a seat belt and was ejected from the vehicle, Watts said. He was pronounced dead around 12:30 a.m. at a hospital. The S.C. Highway Patrol is investigating. — AP

SC lawmakers seek road fixes

Setzler, Stringer looking for funding

By Tim Smith
Staff writer
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COLUMBIA — Two lawmakers are proposing separate fixes to different parts of the state's crumbling road system, one to address the state's local roads and the other to widen and improve South Carolina's interstates.

Sen. Nikki Setzler, leader of Senate Democrats, is proposing the creation of a fund for

interstate improvement that will take money from the sales tax on cars and leverage it with revenue bonds to collect almost \$600 million a year.

Rep. Tommy Stringer, a Greenville Republican, is proposing two different methods to fund the transfer of up to 21,000 miles of secondary roads now in the state's road inventory to county governments. One bill to be pre-filed today would carve out 5 cents of the state's existing 16.8-cent gas tax for the transfer while another would increase the gas tax to fund the transfer.

"DOT can't be reformed un-

til we actually define the parameters of its duties which should not include managing these types of secondary roads," Stringer told *The Greenville News*.

"The majority of specific complaints that I get are about these types of secondary roads. The General Assembly needs to start with the foundation of the road system — the roads that lead to our driveways."

The two lawmakers said they planned to pre-file their bills today as lawmakers prepare legislation for the new session that starts in January. Lawmakers agree that the

state's road system is in dire need of repair but how to fund that work remains a subject of debate.

A special House committee has been looking at the issue since September and its chairman wants the Legislature to address reforms at DOT and transferring local roads out of the state's inventory before debating new road funding.

The Senate earlier this year set road funding as a priority issue but never took up a road funding bill for a vote.

Gov. Nikki Haley, mean-

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The building that formerly housed the North Greenville Food Crisis Ministry in Travelers Rest is being renovated.

HIEDI HEILBRUNN/STAFF

Q&AMY: UPDATE ON 'FILLING STATION' IN TRAVELERS REST

Main street building to become small shop

By Amy Clarke Burns
Staff writer
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A reader asked recently about the changes going on in Travelers Rest. When I wrote the response, I made an assumption that the reader's reference to an "old filling station" referred to the former Bryant & Lell Tire Center.

She wrote me after the story

was published to let me know that she meant the lot behind the former tire shop, a rather dilapidated structure that has seen some sprucing up of its own in recent weeks.

So for that reader and anyone else who wondered, here's the deal with that "old filling station."

Amy in short: The former home of the North Greenville Food Crisis Ministry, the building is headed to becoming a small shop for local artisans.

A bit more: Located at 19 S. Main St., the lot was originally

purchased by Standard Oil in 1923 and was owned by Esso — later Exxon — for decades. From the 1970s, it was owned by League Oil Co.

Depending on what you mean by "old filling station," this site probably wasn't it. That was next door, on the site of the former Bryant & Lell. It was there that Al Drake operated a well known Esso station, which doubled as the home of the town's first firetruck, according to Al's son, Tom Drake. (Fun fact: the women's restroom at Drake's Esso station

had a heated toilet seat.) Drake's was torn down, and Bryant & Lell was built on the site in 1960, according to "Images of America: Travelers Rest," a pictorial history published by the Travelers Rest Historical Society.

The lot just south of the Bryant & Lell building, the one at issue in this column, was actually a Standard Oil distributor site, operated by A.B. Batson, Drake said.

Batson came to Travelers

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Clemson gets \$3.3M for wetlands research

By Tonya Maxwell
Staff writer
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A \$3.3 million endowment granted to Clemson University by one of the country's wealthiest businessmen and avid outdoorsman is expected to fund up to 30 students as they study wetlands ecology and waterfowl.

The gift, made by Cox Enterprises Chairman James C. Kennedy, will fund the first

endowed conservation center for waterfowl along the Atlantic Flyway, a 3,000-mile corridor critical for migrating birds.

"My first duck hunting experience was in the South Carolina Lowcountry and it was life-changing," Kennedy said in a statement. "With this gift, I hope to ensure that future generations have waterfowl and wetlands to enjoy, and that we continue to produce young people with a pas-

sion to study and steward these important natural resources for years to come."

Kennedy in 2008 established an endowed chair at Mississippi State University focusing on wetlands conservation in that region, and when he sought similar proposals for the East Coast, Clemson was one of four universities that applied, said an individual familiar with the selection.

Clemson had not only a

strong plan, but an existing facility and knowledge base that captured Kennedy's attention.

The center will be housed at the existing Belle W. Baruch Institute for Coastal Ecology and Forest Science in Georgetown and Nemours Wildlife Foundation in Beaufort.

In the first year, six students at the undergraduate

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MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Clement's Kindness Fund helps ill children, families



Staff report

Clement's Kindness Fund for the Children is one of the beneficiaries of the Holiday Sunshine Fund, which now is in its 37th year.

The fund is a joint effort by *The Greenville News*, the *Asheville Citizen Times* and WYFF 4 to help the needy.

Donations to the Holiday Sunshine Fund can be made electronically at www.greenvilleonline.com/HSF or

WYFF4.com or mailed to the Holiday Sunshine Fund, P.O. Box 1688, Greenville, 29602. Donations so far this year have totaled \$3,087. Individual donations are listed below.

Clement's Kindness
Web site address: www.clementskindness.com
Organization address and phone number:
630 East Washington Street Suite A Greenville, SC 29601 864-233-5925

Contact Person's Name and Phone Number:
Ben Norwood III, Board Chair 864-233-5925

Impact on community:
Clement's Kindness Fund for the Children was founded to help address the medical, psychological, social, emotional and financial needs of Upstate families impacted by pediatric cancer and other serious blood disorders. The fund provides assistance to families facing the tremendous challenges surrounding a child's diagnosis, treatment, and recovery at the BI-LO Charities Children's Cancer Center. The fund also financially supports many programs and initiatives at the Cancer Center.

Years serving community
Clement's Kindness Fund for

the Children was established in 2002 by Priscilla and Knox Haynsworth in memory of their son Clement.

Your top project or initiative:
The BI-LO Charities Children's Cancer Center averages over 5,000 outpatient visits per year for children with cancer and serious blood disorders. More than half of these visits involve treatment in the outpatient Infusion Center/Day Hospital. There, children receive chemotherapy, blood transfusions, immune therapies and other life-saving medications.

This year, with the financial support from Clement's Kind-

ness, the BI-LO Charities Children's Cancer Center will be able to update their outdated equipment. This includes new infusion chairs and beds that feature the latest technology including heating and massage elements and even built-in iPads and wireless headphones. These features are essential for children who are struggling through daily treatments for life-threatening illnesses by creating procedural distraction therapies, therapeutic play and diagnosis education. The updated equipment will allow the BI-LO Charities Children's Cancer

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QUESTIONS

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the report said, Skipper said it wasn't known if the gun was loaded.

Deputies said in the report that attempts were made to get Pepper to come out so they could get him help, but he refused. Authorities said a Sheriff's Office negotiator was on his way to the scene when the shooting

happened. The stand-off lasted roughly 40 minutes, Skipper said.

When asked why deputies didn't wait for the negotiator to arrive, Skipper said the scales tipped when Pepper broke open a window with a gun and pointed it at deputies.

Deputies said in the report that they told Pepper to drop the gun and step out of the house. Pepper responded by yelling at deputies to "get out of my yard," and

"I didn't call ya'll," the report said.

"After a period of negotiating and pleading with Pepper to drop his weapon, Pepper then extended his arm out of the window and pointed it in the direction of deputies," the report said.

A deputy, whose name isn't being released, responded by firing a single shot from his .223 caliber rifle. Pepper was transported to AnMed Health at 3:06 a.m., where he died

about an hour later from a single gunshot wound to the chest, said Deputy Coroner Charlie Boseman.

Skipper said the deputies knew Pepper, who had no previous criminal record or history of mental illness.

The deputy on leave is a 20-year veteran with the Sheriff's Office, Skipper said. The others were experienced and well-trained. "They're not brand new officers," Skipper said.

NETWORK

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mance report cards and implements care management resources for all participating doctors.

"It's making sure that everybody gets all the care they need," he said. "So in real time, the practices and care managers the network is contracting with help physicians work through the system in an efficient manner, not duplicating services or ordering unnecessary tests, and providing follow-up when they need it."

"Part of what the network will provide is a care management program that identifies those issues and brings resources to the table, for example, help with transportation, access, education and coordination," he said.

"With a diabetic, for example, we know from previous studies that in the U.S. that although we may agree there are seven things a diabetic should be receiving, only about half get the standard of care," he said. "The attempt here is to document what the guidelines are and create a system where we assure that patient gets all the things done."

So in the past, while a doctor may have ordered a blood test, the patient may not have gotten it, he said. Or if the test was performed, the glucose level may have been too high, but there may have been no follow-up, or intervention may not have occurred until the next office visit, which could be months down the road.

The concept also extends to dealing with socio-economic issues that can affect whether patients get that care, he said, such as affordability and transportation.



MYKAL MCELLOWNEY/STAFF
Dr. Joanne Skaggs works with patient William Harris.

Meeting benchmarks

Socio-economic factors like lack of access are the biggest single factor in determining adequate care, Sinopoli said.

"Part of what the network will provide is a care management program that identifies those issues and brings resources to the table, for example, help with transportation, access, education and coordination," he said.

For instance, patients may not have the ability to leave their homes for a variety of reasons. In the network, a nurse may be sent to the home to draw blood or the patient may be linked with telemedicine for a remote consultation.

And because patient participation improves outcomes, physicians in the network will partner with their patients to develop customized treatment plans.

Physicians who fail to meet the standards will be provided with support services to help reach the benchmarks or will be excluded from the network, he said.

Though GHS is a member and is paying for the IT systems necessary to support MyHealth First, the network is an integrated group of physicians and healthcare providers in a separate entity over-

seen by its own 12-member board of managers, Sinopoli said.

It operates across nine counties - Abbeville, Anderson, Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, Newberry, Oconee, Pickens and Spartanburg.

Slow change

Networks like these are growing across the country, driven by national reimbursement and regulatory changes, said Alwyn Cassil, an independent health policy consultant with Policy Translation in Silver Spring, Maryland.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, for example, is emphasizing payment for outcomes as opposed to the traditional fee-for-service model where providers are paid more if they do more no matter what results, she said.

"Very clearly, physicians, through Medicare and even private payers, are facing far more requirements to do a better job of collecting data and reporting on their performance," she said.

And hospitals are being penalized by CMS for readmissions. As a result, she said, they are being forced to reevaluate their roles and move to more outpatient care.

"There is increasing pressure on hospitals to move beyond the four walls of the hospital ...

and a way to integrate clinical care that improves care for patients and allows the providers to give the care more efficiently and save money," she said.

"If you can provide better or comparable care for a lower cost, that's a win-win for everybody," she added, "if those cost reductions get passed on to those of us who pay for care."

Such a large network connected by technology also potentially provides a hospital with a larger patient base, she said.

The system is slowly changing so that providers have the incentives to give the right care as efficiently as possible, she said.

Critical mass

"This idea of aligning payment incentives is a very important one to get enough critical mass to really change behavior and how care is delivered in the real world," she said.

Sinopoli said providers are under increasing pressure to find ways to offer good care at an affordable cost, and private insurers are increasingly offering incentives similar to CMS, as well.

"It's no secret that the U.S. healthcare system is unsustainable," he said. "Health systems and providers need to provide a more coordinated approach to the populations they serve."

Harris' internist, Dr. Joanne Skaggs, said the team approach is what made the difference in his health.

"It's different than just come to the doctor's office, get refills, and see you at the next appointment."

"It's more of a conversation and partnership."

Q&AMY

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Rest in 1931 as a distributor of Esso products for Standard Oil, according to the Travelers Rest photo book, which states his plant was located near the site of the North Greenville Food Crisis Ministry. The site now belongs to Travelers Rest United Methodist Church, which purchased the property in 2002 to have a more visible presence on Main Street, said pastor Jonathan Tompkins.

"We're tucked back just enough to where you can drive right by and not see us," he said.

From 2000 to 2012, the building was inhabited by North Greenville Food Crisis Ministry, which is not directly affiliated with the church.

That group moved to its current location on U.S. 25 Bypass, across from Reedy River Baptist Church, in May 2012, and the building has been empty ever since.

Now a member of the Methodist church is re-

purposing the building as an artisan shop for local craftsmen.

"Instead of it sitting vacant, we wanted to do something useful. One of our members had an idea, so we're letting him run with that," Tompkins said.

That church member, Tim Barnes, is in the process of cleaning up the place and sectioning off a smaller area for himself and a handful of other artisans to set up shop.

"The city was on us to do something because the paint was flaking off and it was unsightly," Barnes said.

The shop will be called Tralidside Traders, he said, and he drives to open by the Travelers Rest Christmas Parade on Dec. 13.

About five artists will sell goods ranging from jewelry and birdhouses to stained glass pieces and tables made from concrete, sewing machine stands and ceramic.

Got a question? Send it to Q&Amy by emailing me at aburns@greenvillenews.com or calling 864-298-3822. You can find me on Twitter at @QandAmyNews.

RESEARCH

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though graduate levels will be named Kennedy Fellows, with two dozen more students receiving funding at various levels as the program becomes established, said Greg Yarrow, professor and chair of Clemson's Natural Resources Division.

"It's exciting because this is for our students and trains the future professionals, the biologists, the scientists and the managers in water-fowl ecology," he said.

Coastal South Carolina is home to some of the country's great, pristine wetlands, Yarrow said, but many areas are

shrinking, claimed by development and changing land use.

With the endowment, students may research salinity of fresh and brackish water as it's infiltrated by seawater or the mottled duck, a species that has recently taken up residence in the Palmetto State.

Kennedy has long supported conservation efforts, and Forbes ranks him at No. 55 on its list of wealthiest Americans, estimating his net worth at \$8.2 billion. Cox Enterprises is comprised of a gamut of media holdings including a cable company, television stations, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and automotive services like Kelly Blue Book.

CHILDREN

Continued from Page 3A

Center to create a comfortable setting that will drastically improve this portion of a patient's treatment.

How do contributions of time or money help: Clement's Kindness recognizes every challenge a family endures when faced with a life-threatening illness, and as a result, the fund provides assistance for all aspects related to a child's diagnosis, treatment and recovery. When you contribute to Clement's Kindness, you are helping families in a time of true need, both financially and psychologically. In addition, you are helping to make a difference at the BI-LO Charities Children's Cancer Center by helping to provide numerous programs for the patients and their families at the hospital.

How can people volunteer: Those interested in learning more about board positions with Clement's Kindness Fund for the Children should contact our Board Chair, Ben Norwood at 864-233-5925. Clement's Kindness is very involved

with Camp Courage, a week long summer camp for the patients. Those interested in volunteering at Camp Courage should visit the following webpage for more information: <http://www.bilocharitiesphoe.com/camp-courage-volunteers.php>

Donations to the Holiday Sunshine Fund include: Robert Ellis, \$100; Anonymous, \$50; Anonymous, \$250; Anonymous, \$50; Harry Leavengood, in memory of my mother Clara Leavengood, \$100; Anonymous, \$200; Peggy and Billy Hill, Greer, \$100; The Elliott's, Greenville, \$100; Susan Little, Greenville, in memory of Patrick Burke, \$100.

Also, Harold Doss, Greenville, \$250; The Hensley's, Simpsonville, \$10; Mr. & Mrs. Cooper, Easley, \$25; Mr. & Mrs. Angradi, Greenville, \$250; William Foster, Greenville, \$100; Robert Howard, Greenville, \$100; William and Christine Bonner, Greenville, \$100; Anonymous, \$100; Jennifer West, Greer, \$50; Judith Coe, Greenville, \$100; The Cockerill's, Simpsonville, With thanks, Frank Grant, \$150; Diane Tierney, Greenville, \$25; The Daniel's, Greenville, \$100; Anonymous, \$50; In appreciation of Celeste R. Price, \$500; Anonymous, \$7.

VISITORS

Continued from Page 1A

social media campaign embraced by an estimated hundreds of thousands community visitors, residents and supporters.

"Our job is to tell the story," she said. "It's never been done at this level."

The number of people staying overnight in Greenville County's hotels and motels for October beats the county's previous record by 211 rooms, set in June 2012.

The Greenville News analyzed local, state and national data provided by STR, considered the top authority on hotel industry insight. The company tracks occupancy rates for hotels and motels throughout the Unit-

ed States, along with forecasting trends for coming years.

October events in or close to Greenville included three Clemson University and two Furman University home football games, three major attractions at the Bon Secours Wellness Arena, the music and food event Fall for Greenville and Peace Center offerings on three separate weekends.

To date, four months this year rank among the highest hotel rooms filled in the county's history: May, June, July and October. The other top months for hotel stays included four in 2013 and two in 2012.

Stilwell said efforts to inform potential visitors about attractions and events has led to a higher increase in leisure travel. The campaign is pay-

ing off, literally.

In 2013, visitors to Greenville spent more than a \$1 billion, the area's first time to reach the 10-digit milestone, she said. Of that chunk of change, \$58 million went to local and state taxes.

"It's a continual flow of new money into our back yard," she said. "This allows our city leaders to grow our special community."

The Greenville News analysis shows total overnight stays in the county so far this year on track to surpass the yearly record set in 2013 with 68,648 rooms. STR releases hotel stays on county levels roughly 20 days following the end of the month.

Along with increases in actual hotel rooms filled, six of the top 10 months for occupancy rates happened this year.

Hotel occupancy

rates have increased annually in Greenville County since 2010, overlapping with the travel economy emerging from the national recession.

Greenville's 70.9 percent hotel occupancy so far this year is 7.7 percent higher than statewide numbers and 4.8 percent higher compared to nationwide figures.

Plans exist to add at least another 1,000 hotel rooms to the Greenville area in the next few years, Stilwell said.

Downtown Greenville Hampton Inn and Suites general manager Matt Lew said he's not surprised by the planned increase in hotel rooms. "Once you get here, feel it and see it, you're going to want to come back," Lew said. "We have to turn away more business now."