IN SPORTS: Sumter High welcomes 5 into athletic hall of fame **B1**

the Sumter ITEM

WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17-19, 2025 | Serving South Carolina since October 15, 1894 **$2.50**

Bates' Great 8 honored



ABIGAIL PITTMAN / THE SUMTER ITEM

Members of the Great 8 at Bates Middle School stand with their bonus checks as part of the state Department of Education's Strategic Compensation Pilot Grant Program on Friday, Dec. 12, at the school. The eight teachers earned a total of $121,514.04 after they met or exceeded performance benchmarks for their students on state testing in the spring.

South Sumter school part of state initiative tying teacher bonuses to student growth

BY BRUCE MILLS
bruce@theitem.com

A new state pilot program implemented last year offers classroom teachers performance-based bonuses tied to measurable student academic growth, and eight educators at Bates Middle School earned a total of about $121,000 through the initiative.

The South Sumter school in Sumter School District surprised and recognized the eight teachers in English Language Arts and math — dubbed "The Great 8" — in an Academic Pep Rally on Friday, Dec. 12, that also included district administrators and local dignitaries inside Bates' gymnasium.

Generally, school pep rallies honor athletic teams for their achievements on the field, but the state Department of Education is trying to change that now with the new program that it considers a shift to modernize the teacher compensation structure and incentivize top educators' effectiveness in the classroom. The state initiative is called the Strategic Compensation Pilot Grant Program.

A total of about 400 teachers in 37 schools across the state were part of the first-year pilot, and Bates was selected earlier this year as one of those grant recipients based on its proposed compensation model to reward classroom teachers tied to students' growth in state testing.

Teachers were selected for bonuses based on their demonstrated impact on student academic achievement to include the number of students who met or exceeded standards on the SC READY.

Five Bates math teachers and three English language arts teachers made up "The Great 8," and four who were interviewed said it was the first time that they have ever been a part of any performance-based compensation model.

They also agreed that they think

SEE **BONUSES,** PAGE A11

BATES TEACHER BONUSES IN PROGRAM

NAME	GRANT AWARD
Rashida Myers	$27,527.04
Corelle Fair	$27,527.04
John Ouma	$27,527.04
Syreeta Parker	$13,763.52
Stacy Williams	$13,763.52
Lynne Nelson	$6,881.76
James Carpenter	$3,047.94
Lea Hipolito	$1,476.18
TOTAL	**$121,514.04**

Source: Sumter School District

Heating need can be measured by cold

Item's inaugural JingleFest raises $593 for campaign

BY KEVIN HOWELL
Sumter United Ministries

Temperature is measured in degrees, but coldness is felt.

As the cold weather moves in and at times flexes with freezing temperatures, the anxiety among our neighbors in need is very genuine. We all expect an occasional shiver, the sting of a blast of cold wind or needing to wear extra layers. For our clients, many of them have greater challenges, such as defunct HVAC systems, inadequate insulation, cracks and gaps in flooring or exterior walls and financial hurdles to afford proper heating.



The requests have been more frequent and diverse in the last few days at the Crisis Relief Ministry.

We interviewed a senior who makes less than $700 in Social Security. He works odd jobs worth a few hundred dollars a month just to afford kerosene to heat his home. Yet, his overall income is less than $1,000 a month. His HVAC unit does not work, and, per the conditions of his lease, a repair is not required by the property owner. He feels the stress of not having enough money

SEE **FIRESIDE,** PAGE A11

Bills will increase almost 8% for Duke customers

BY RHIANNON O'BERRY
rhiannon@theitem.com

The average Duke Energy Progress residential customer's monthly electric bill will increase by approximately $11.23, or 7.8%, on Feb. 1 next year, after a state regulator approved the electric utility's rate proposal Friday, Dec. 12.

One intervenor that contributed to lowering impact on consumers in the final order issued by the Public Service Commission was the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs. Roger Hall, deputy consumer advocate, has been with SCDCA for almost six years and said about these cases, "It's very complicated."

Duke Energy's application originally proposed an increase of about $21.66, or 15%. Hall said one reason his office advocated for lower return on equity, or profit, is that being a utility is much less

SEE **ENERGY,** PAGE A11

Item's first JingleFest draws over 500, raises hundreds for Fireside Fund

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE
alaysha@theitem.com

Holiday magic was plentiful on Saturday, Dec. 13, as clear skies and the perfect temperature for *The Sumter Item*'s inaugural JingleFest, presented by Prisma Health Tuomey, drew a crowd of more than 500 attendees to USC Sumter for a joyful start to the most wonderful time of year.

From the moment the festive tunes began to play and guests arrived, JingleFest was alive with warmth and cheer. Dozens of children gathered for book readings by friendly faces in diverse occupations across the county and signed up for library cards to begin their own reading journeys, with help from Sumter County Library and its bookmobile.

Many attendees snagged last-minute gifts from more than 40 local vendors who showcased their nifty crafts and unique

SEE **JINGLEFEST,** PAGE A10

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DEATHS, B6

Sue Bell McDonald Weeks
James Marshal Georgia
Zennie Davis Harshman
Jennie Linn McLaurin Duffie
Ruby Lulene Brazell Paul
Raymond Lindley Burke
Elizann Wetherspoon
Sgt. 1st Class Stevie Randy McCall
Boonyong Nokaew
William Anthony Stokes
Geneva Dixon Wilson

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Religion A4
Sports B1



the Sumter ITEM

SECOND FRONT

E-mail: pressrelease@theitem.com



PHOTOS BY RHIANNON O'BERRY / THE SUMTER ITEM

Guest speaker Nancy Mitchell, center, was escorted by Civil Air Patrol Commander Capt. Londa Stanley, right, and Deputy Commander for Cadets Second Lt. Ryan Polk, left, to place the eighth and final remembrance wreath in honor and in memory of the United States servicemen and servicewomen, prisoners of war and those missing in action.

Wreaths Across America honors veterans

BY RHIANNON O'BERRY
rhiannon@theitem.com

From chairs donated by Christ Community Church to the hundreds of donated wreaths and a massive U.S. flag provided by Shaw Air Force Base fire department that rippled above it all, this year's Wreaths Across America ceremony at Sumter Cemetery, 700 W. Oakland Ave., was a convention of diverse community effort. The event, hosted for the 18th year by the Civil Air Patrol Sumter Composite Squadron, sought to "Remember the fallen, honor those who serve and have served, and to teach future generations about the sacrifices of freedom," relayed the coordinator for this location of the national event, Capt. A. Denise Owen.

The guest speaker was Nancy Mitchell, whose diverse life experience spans from a career in medicine to volunteering for service organizations. The daughter of a World War II veteran, Mitchell has contributed to a variety of military support groups such as the Blue Star Mothers of America Inc. and the American Legion Riders.

After sharing and honoring stories of veterans she's encountered along the way across years of personal experience and helping others with their journeys, she said, "All the Marines, all the servicemen and women served for us, and I think the only thing I can do in life is to serve for you. You protect us, and you save our country."

One emphasized goal of the event is education, and many Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts attended. Caroline Thames, a 12-year-old Girl Scout, said at the ceremony, she learned about the sadness involved with serving.

"Whenever moms or their brothers and sisters lose people, it's a heavy take on them," she said. "It's good to respect the people that serve our country because they are protecting us from the bad things that are out there in this world."

The collaboration that facilitated the Sumter event is characteristic of the parent organization's origins and operations since. Wreaths Across America began in 1992 when Morrill Worcester, owner of Worcester Wreath Co. of Harrington, Maine, had a surplus of wreaths and coordinated with a senator to ensure they were placed on graves at Arlington Cemetery with dwindling visitors. The initiative gathered local support and has since swelled into a nonprofit with national reach. In 2024, there were almost 5,000 participating locations that placed more than three million sponsored veterans' wreaths.



Dozens of Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts from different troops attended and helped place wreaths on graves and the outside fence. "I wanted to thank the parents," guest speaker Nancy Mitchell said after the ceremony, "because we need to teach our children and our grandchildren about our military, what they do for us and to thank them."



Lt. Col. Jonathan Bryan, also Sumter County attorney, reads the names of veterans for whom wreaths were donated in honor and in memory of.

During the ceremony, cadets and senior members of the Sumter Composite Squadron Civil Air Patrol placed seven ceremonial wreaths during the ceremony to honor each of the U.S. military service branches in the order in which they were founded. The Civil Air Patrol (CAP), a Congress-chartered public service organization, acts both as a nonprofit and the civilian auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force. At the Sumter Composite Squadron, cadets participate in a year-round program that provides abundant diverse opportunities for personal and professional growth.

"The program transforms youth into dynamic citizens and aerospace leaders through a curriculum that focuses on four elements: leadership, aerospace, fitness and character," its website says.

After the ceremony, cadets dispersed hundreds of donated wreaths to attendees who sought out veterans' graves at Sumter Cemetery and placed the wreaths, instructed to say the veterans' names while doing so.

"We need to still support our military," Mitchell said during the ceremony. "Call someone you know who served, check to see how they're doing. We lose 22 a day from suicide because they're lost when they come home — so say their name, tell their story, but never forget."

"Coordinating the ceremony is an honor and a gift; I am motivated by gratitude," said Owen, who wishes to thank for their service Staff Sgt. Nicholas L. Myers, USAF; Sgt. First Class Dallas (Benton) Blakely, S.C. Army National Guard; and Sgt. Maj. Max A. Myers, U.S. Army. "How could I not be thankful for the men and women across history, and even now, who have given the ultimate sacrifice for me? I owe them."

CCTC to offer night courses for welding program in January

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE
alaysha@theitem.com

In an effort to create more enrollment opportunities for students, Central Carolina Technical College added a new spring start option for its welding program.

Beginning in January, CCTC will offer a part-time, evening course for the program, which is designed for individuals who need the flexibility to take classes at night because of work, family obligations or personal preference.

Traditionally, the welding program begins in August for the fall semester and takes three semesters to complete for full-time students. This new part-time section held in the evenings will take five semesters to complete.

The college expanded its offerings because of its full-time program consistently reaching capacity, leading many to be on a waitlist. Adding this pathway allows more students to access a "high-demand field without delaying their education another year," the college said.

Welding remains a strong career choice in our region and across South Carolina, with employers frequently expressing the need for skilled welders in manufacturing, construction, fabrication and industrial maintenance, according to the college.

CCTC's welding program is designed to prepare students for these opportunities with hands-on training, modern equipment and instruction from experienced faculty. Graduates can pursue entry-level welding positions or continue building advanced skills that lead to higher-earning roles over time.

Classes start Monday, Jan. 12, and those interested can apply and register online at *cctech.edu*.

More details about the college's welding program can be found at *tinyurl.com/4pk6j5zu*.

CCTC also offers several other programs through its Evening College. Information about the specific Evening College section is available at *www.cctech.edu/eveningcollege*.

CLARIFICATION

A cutline associated with a photo of Stafford Meadows subdivision on Page 2A in the Weekend edition should have said that the subdivision on Deschamps Road is in close proximity to Shawn Ragin's planned site for Rise Entrepreneurial Leadership Institute (RISE) that is scheduled to open in August.

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SUMTER TODAY

NOW ONLINE

https://tinyurl.com/382ewf2u

Sumter shows up for the holidays! From colorful floats and marching bands to dancers, first responders and local schools, the annual Sumter Christmas Parade — presented by Sumter Evening Optimist Club — brought the entire community together in one unforgettable celebration. With 116 parade entries, 42 brand-new participants and more than 2,800 performers, this was one of the largest Christmas parades Sumter has seen in years.

UNIVERSITY OF South Carolina SUMTER

Sumter sings, steps into the holidays with 803Fresh, Elijah Bradford at 'A Soulful Holiday'

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE
alaysha@theitem.com

Sumter gathered for an unforgettable evening of Southern soul and classic R&B on Saturday, Dec. 13, as rising soul/R&B star 803Fresh, known for his smash hit "Boots on the Ground," teamed up with hometown writer, director and musical artist Elijah Bradford and The Valentinos for "A Soulful Holiday" at Morris College.

The mix of Bradford and the Valentinos' electric stage presence during tributes to The Temptations, The O'Jays, Aretha Franklin — to name a few — with 803Fresh's Carolina Soul sound filled the night with joy and pure soul.

Attendees stepped out, and even on stage, in their cowboy and cowgirl boots, dancing their way across the stage and well into the night during this special performance.

Bradford expressed his gratitude for all who made the night possible, from community to the ones who joined in for the performance. He gave special thanks to Alexis Bradford, Brandi Magazine and MarQuitta Bradford for their help in managing the event and Sumter County Sheriff's Office for security.

Missed this show? Bradford said there is more where that came from. For all upcoming events by Coffee House Productions, visit *www.elijahbradford.com*.



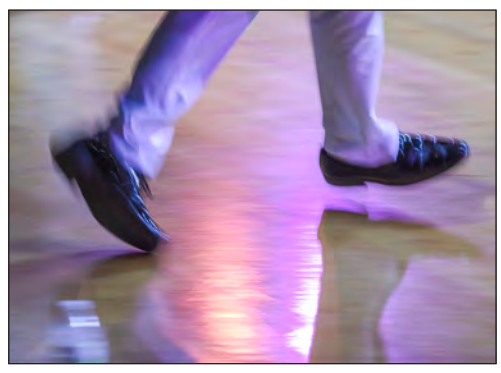
PHOTOS BY MICAH GREEN / THE SUMTER ITEM



















3 ways the public can help shape a Safety Action Plan for Sumter County roadways

BY RHIANNON O'BERRY
rhiannon@theitem.com

Team Sumter's Safe Streets and Roads for All Safety Action Plan already has collected data for all crashes in Sumter, but now it needs public input and perspectives from residents, business owners and other community leaders. The plan will be finalized in spring and ultimately shapes how local and federal funding on public roads is allocated, said the project manager, Kyle Kelly; *The Sumter Item* sat down with him to discuss why this project matters and how the public can participate.

"South Carolina is third worst in the nation in fatality rate per million miles traveled. We're the ninth worst in the nation in an unbelted occupant death," Kelly said. "Every week, on average, somebody in Sumter County is killed or seriously injured on our roadways; every day, we average eight crashes of varying severity."

The plan aims to reduce fatalities and serious injuries from car wrecks in Sumter County and the City of Sumter to zero. Kelly said the plan will shape projects that already have funding set aside, such as federal money, Capital Sales Tax (Penny for Progress) money for intersection safety and other money for roads that the city and county have access to. The plan will also shape policy that will facilitate further action in the future.

At the public workshop on Dec. 11, organizers for this initiative presented attendees with plan information as well as an overview of the high rates of car wrecks in Sumter as context for why it is necessary. The workshop also functioned as a listening session for the public to provide input. If you missed it, there remain three opportunities for the public to provide the city with input to shape this plan.

One is an ongoing survey in which you can list your top concerns (pedestrian safety, intersection safety, congestion, etc.), put markers on a map to highlight specific areas that concern you and provide feedback on many potential strategies including young driver education, improving the bicycle network, DUI enforcement and improved emergency response technology. The survey will end near February.

"It would be great if we could get even 1% of the community to respond," said Kelly, though he hopes for more, and that participants will pass it along to others as well.

Organizations with a pertinent perspective and broad impact can apply to become stakeholders in the regular summits for the action plan. "Stakeholders," Kelly said, "by virtue of their organizational representation have an additional layer of ability to bring issues to the table, but also to leverage their organization in support."

Current stakeholders include Sumter United Ministries, South Carolina Department of Public Health, Sumter YMCA, Sumter County Sheriff's Office, Sumter Police Department, South Carolina Department of Transportation offices, South Carolina Highway Patrol and South Carolina Department of Public Safety.

Kelly said stakeholders like SUM and YMCA can help spread the survey and also testify to broader trends they witness, such as limited mobility for people without cars.

"They're dealing with a lot of folks that are in need, who have unique constraints and challenges," he said. "They're touching a lot of people that we may not see here in the planning department on a daily basis."

In spring, there will be another public meeting to discuss the draft of the plan before it is finalized. Find full project information and updates, as well as the survey, at *www.sumtersc.gov/SS4A*. You can also contact Kyle Kelly at *kkelly@sumtersc.gov* or (803) 774-1612.

I heard the bells on Christmas Day

Most people have read or at least heard of a man named Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882). He was a literary giant in his lifetime and is still known today in many circles as "The Children's Poet," as several schools around our nation are named in his honor. You may remember some of his original works, which include Paul Revere's Ride, The Song of Hiawatha and Evangeline, and he was also the first American to completely translate Dante Alighieri's Comedy. As one of the fireside writers from New England, he is regarded as the most popular poet of the 19th century.



The Rev. Dr. Billy Holland

On July 9, 1861, tragedy struck the Longfellow home. His wife, Fanny, was near an open window, placing locks of her daughter's hair in a packet, using hot sealing wax to secure it. It was never known whether a spark from a match or the sealing wax was the cause, but suddenly her dress caught fire, and she was engulfed in flames. Henry was sleeping and was suddenly awakened by her screams for help. He ran into the room and immediately tried to smother the flames as best he could, first with a rug and then his own body, but the damage from the burns was very severe. She died the next morning.

Henry's burns were so extensive on his face and hands that he was unable to attend his wife's funeral. The scars on his face made shaving nearly impossible, so he allowed his beard to grow, which became associated with his image. The anguish within his soul was beyond what anyone could fathom. His family could see his suffering in his eyes, and they observed his long periods of silence. At times, he feared that he would be sent to an asylum on account of his sorrow.

A couple of years later, in 1863, there was another crisis when his son Charles Longfellow, without telling his family, boarded a train headed for Washington, D.C., to join President Lincoln's Union army to fight in the Civil War. On the first day of that December, Henry was dining alone at his home when a telegram arrived with the news that Charley had been shot and was being transferred to the Rapidan River. Henry immediately set out to search for his son and arrived by train on Dec. 5. He was alarmed when informed by the army surgeon that his son's wound was very serious and that Charles would most likely be paralyzed. Longfellow, as a 57-year-old widowed father of six children, was not only witnessing his country fight a war against itself, but his oldest son had also been struck down on the battlefield.

Although he was admired for his gift of communicating the human experience, Longfellow still yearned for divine peace, which only God can give. On that Christmas Day in 1863, he heard the Christmas bells ringing in Cambridge and the singing of "Peace On Earth," but he considered the division and violence in his country to be in direct contradiction with a joyous holiday. He sat down and desperately tried to reflect on the joys of knowing that God is not dead or sleeping, and that He is the only one who can heal, save and give hope to the soul. He was never considered a hymn writer; however, the poem he wrote on that day expresses the agony about the dark condition of a nation and was later set to music by Englishman John Calkin. The result is one of our most beloved Christmas carols, "I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day."

There is a theme of passion and determination within the poem that expresses how an attitude of confidence and trust in the Lord can overcome fear and hopelessness even in the midst of bleak despair.

The Civil War was in full swing, and the devastation from the battle of Gettysburg still gripped the nation in a state of trauma. He must have asked himself how we can have peace on Earth and goodwill toward men in this war-torn land, where brother fights against brother and father against son. Yes, the days were grievous, but he includes in one of the stanzas, "The wrong shall fail, the right prevail!" Within these words, we sense a man crying out to God in prayer, just like many of us today who are praying for this world to please stop the hatred and the evil, and may all people be unified with God's forgiveness and love. This reminds us that eternal peace and harmony shall one day be established when the Prince of Peace shall reign forever.

Read more about the Christian life at billyhollandministries.com.

CHURCH NEWS

To update your listing or add a listing, please email *pressrelease@theitem.com* and include Church News in the subject line.

The 33rd Annual Adopt A Family for Christmas Program will be held at 5 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 20, at St. John Missionary Baptist Church, 102 W. Clark St., Pinewood. Featured will be The Sinkler Family, Heavenly Angels, Heavenly Stars, The Sons of Faith, Alexander (Juju) Pendergrass, Clayton and The Mighty Wonders, The Gospel Sensationals, The Sumter Violinaires, Calvary Church Choir, Cedric Bennett and Company, Payton Burgess, The Valentinos and more. Donations can be sent to Cashapp $LawandaS477. Memo: Adopt a family

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Small Groups: Wednesdays at
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Baptist - Missionary

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219 S. Washington St. Sumter
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Rev. George P. Windley, Jr.
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Sunday 11:00 am, in person
and live stream on
YouTube and Facebook
Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 pm on Zoom
Please check our websitefbmcsumter.org
for more information or call the church
Tuesday through Thursday 10:00 am to
1:00 pm.

Jehovah Missionary Baptist Church
609 Manning Ave. • 803.775.4032
Marion H. Newton
Sunday Worship: 8:30 am
Wednesday Bible Study - Online YouTube

Salem Missionary Baptist Church
320 West Fulton Street
803-775-8054
Reverend Dr. Cartrell Woods, Jr. Pastor
Sun. School 9:00 am
Praise Worship 9:55 am
Worship 10:00 am

Catholic - Roman

Saint Anne and Saint Jude Roman Catholic Church
1855 Beckwood Rd
Sumter, SC. 29153
803-773-9244
Mass times:
Saturday: Vigil Mass 5:00pm
Sunday: 8:00am, 10:00am, 1200pm
(Spanish) 5:00pm

Church of Christ

Plaza Church of Christ
1402 Camden Hwy. • 905-3163
Sunday School: 10 am
Sunday Worship: 11 am & 6 pm
Wed. Bible Class: 7 pm

Episcopal

Church of the Good Shepherd
401 Dingle Street
Sunday Worship: First and Third Sunday
9:30am

Interdenominational

Love Covenant Church
245 Oswego Hwy, Sumter
803-775-7605
Tommy and Angela Frederick, Pastors
Sunday Worship 11am
Thursday Evening 7pm
www.lovecovenantchurch.com

Spiritual Life Christian Center
4710 Broad Street * 968-5771
Randolph & Minerva Paige, Pastors
Sunday Worship: 11:00 am
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:00 pm
www.spirituallifechristiancenter.com

Lutheran - ELCA

St James Lutheran Church
1137 Alice Dr, Sumter
773-2260 / www.stjamessumter.org
Rev. Scott Landrum
Adult Sunday School: 9:00 am
Sunday Worship: 10:00 am

Non-Denominational

Christ Community Church (CCC)
320 Loring Mill Rd., Sumter
www.cccsumter.com
803-905-7850
Sunday Worship 8:08, 9:30 & 11:00 am
Greater St. Paul Church
200 Watkins Street • 803-778-1355
Founder Bishop W.T. English
Sunday School - 10:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship - 11:30 am
Wed. Mid Week Service - 7:30 pm

The Rock Church of Sumter
365 N. Saint Paul Church Rd
803-494-7625 (ROCK)
Pastor Gwendolyn Credle
Sunday School 9:30 am
Worship 11:00 am
Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm

Sumter Bible Church
420 South Pike West, Sumter
803-773-8339 • Pastor Ron Davis
Sunday School 10:00 am
Worship 11:00 am & 6:30 pm
Wed. Bible Study & Prayer 7:00 pm

Pentecostal

First United Pentecostal Church
14 Plowden Mill Rd • 775-9493
Pastor Theron Smith
Sunday Service: 10:00 am & 6:30 pm
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30 pm

Sumter First Pentecostal Holiness Church
2609 McCray's Mill Rd. • 481-8870.
Brett Gardner, Pastor
Sunday School: 10:00 am
Sunday Worship: 10:45 am
Wed. Bible Study/Youth Group: 6:30 p.m.

Presbyterian - ARP

Mayesville Presbyterian Church
109 W. Sumter St, Mayesville
803-453-5759 / www.mayesvillepres.org.
Rev. Brian C. Peake, Pastor
Worship Service 11:00 am
Sunday School 10:00 a.m.

Presbyterian USA

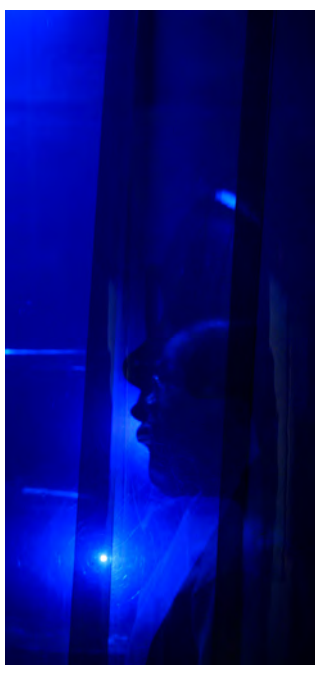
First Presbyterian Church of Sumter
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(803) 773-3814 • info@fpcsumter.org
"Classes for all ages" 9:30 am
Hospitality & Fellowship
(Fellowship Hall) 10:10 a.m.
Worship (Sanctuary) 10:30 a.m.



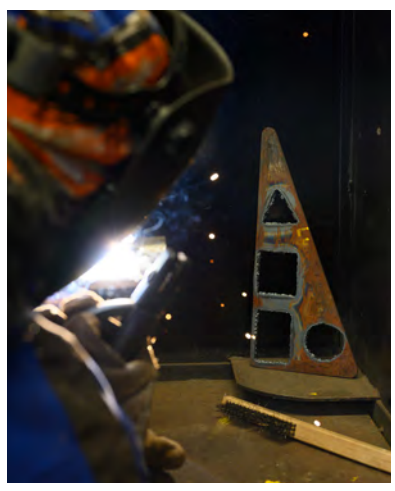
SUMTER'S NEXT GENERATION

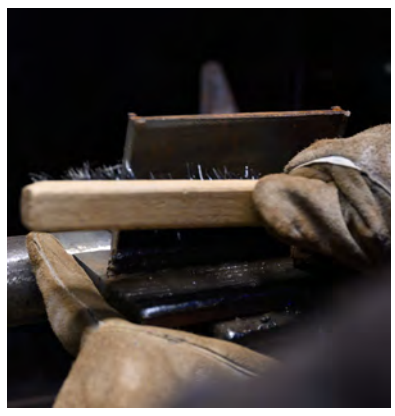
Ly'Asia Washington















CCTC's Ly'Asia Washington finds strength in the spark of welding

It's the curve of a sharp spark fluttering to the ground. The grace of a steady hand. The low hum of metal meeting metal.

For 18-year-old Ly'Asia Washington, the slag-covered booths within Central Carolina Technical College's welding classrooms have become her safe haven. A place where her doubts go quiet, her focus sharpens and her future mirrors that bright, blue hue that reflects in the glass of her helmet. It's a place where pressure builds patience and purposes.

And to think, not long ago, Ly'Asia didn't see herself in this position at all.

Native to Sumter and a graduate of Sumter High School, she had her sights set far outside the county lines. Like many young people on the cusp of the biggest transition in life — from high school to college, from adolescence to adulthood — she was wrestling with uncertainty, depression and the pressure of what the future holds. It is this thinking that drove Ly'Asia to settle on the idea of a 9-5 job. But her mother steered her in a different direction.

"'I don't want you to follow [in] my footsteps. Try going to Central Carolina and do welding,'" she recalled her mother's wise words. "I was like, 'Welding is for boys. That's not my thing.'"

But, as they say, mother knows best — which is why she still applied. Her acceptance in August would be the start of something new and worthwhile. Yet, it would come with its share of hardships.

Welding, as many of her instructors explained, is an "easy hard" program: simple in concept, demanding in execution. For newcomer Ly'Asia, it was just hard.

"It was kind of difficult. I wanted to give up the following month," she admitted.

But perspective is everything when entering the unknown. Once you start to realize the challenge is meant to build your resilience, not break your spirit, then comes the enjoyment — as was the case for Ly'Asia. The more she witnessed her classmates overcome their frustration, the more she was inspired to beat the odds. She accepted help from her instructors, pointers from her peers and the words of affirmation she whispered over herself. From there, it got easier.

There is a great amount of precision, patience, persistence and mathematics that goes into joining steel. Ly'Asia and her classmates learned to build frames from scratch, measuring, cutting, grinding and welding them together. Over time, her sparks settled into skills, her doubt was molded into confidence and her technique grew tenfold, especially in Welding 111 — her favorite class — where she learned vertical welding, one of the most challenging forms to execute in the trade.

With this challenge behind her, she faced another that was just as significant. In Ly'Asia's welding classes, she is one of four women in a predominantly male class. At first, the imbalance was uncomfortable, "awkward," she described. Comments stung, and doubts crept in slowly. Then came the words of her instructor, CCTC Department Chair for Welding Axel Reis.

"He said, 'You and the other females, y'all need to be good welders.' I was like, OK, I might as well stay. I might as well give it a try," she shared. "He always told me [not to] give up because I did want to give up. When he would see me cry or struggle, he would come into my booth, and he would help me. I'm happy about it because I didn't think I could finish, but he helped me keep going."

It was never about doing the work for her, or for any of the students who struggled to get their footing. It was about showing them that possibilities are endless when met with patience and persistence. That balance of support and accountability made all the difference for Ly'Asia. Her confidence is stronger than the steel she tacks together.

And perhaps that is the most powerful part of Ly'Asia's journey. It's not just about what it taught her technically; it's about what it has given her emotionally. She found an outlet that allowed her to work with her hands and throughout her emotions at the same time. It gave her space to breathe, to create, to believe in herself despite the doubts that tried to convince her otherwise.

Her plans to graduate in 2027 do not put an end to her welding journey, with hopes of furthering her education in the trade at a college upstate. For now, she's focused on practicing, improving and preparing her future one weld at a time.

To any students considering welding, or any challenging path in life, her advice is to meet the challenge head on.

"Don't give up; don't listen to what other people tell you in your ear," she encouraged. "Ask for help, and if you want to take your time, take your time, but don't take too long or you will be far behind."

MEET THE TEAM

Alaysha Maple (Writer) I Zac Hooks (Videographer)
Cary Howard (Graphic Designer) I Abigail Pittman (Photographer)

Check out the latest episode of Next Gen and more here.

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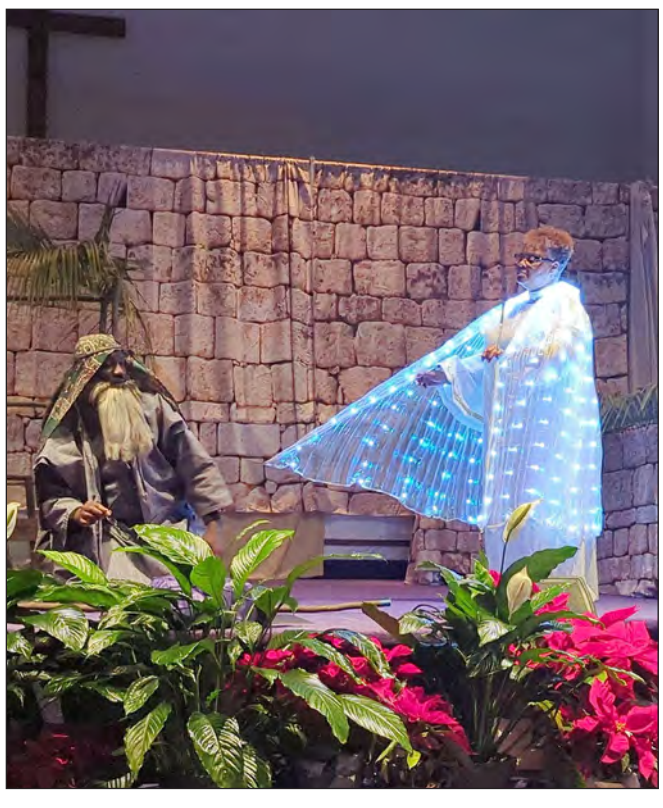


PHOTOS PROVIDED

Trinity Missionary Baptist Church at 155 Wall St. in Sumter held its Christmas production "Emmanuel the King" at the church on Saturday with about 55 cast members. About 300 people attended the event, according to staff member Ella James. The church performs a Christmas production for the public every year, she added.







Babysitting grandchildren brings marriage to the brink



Dear Abby
ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: My wife and I stopped having sexual relations eight years ago. She keeps our two grandchildren 11 to 12 hours a day, five (and sometimes six) days a week. (That's 60 to 70 hours.) By the time they're picked up, she's irritated, agitated, frustrated and wants to be left alone. She doesn't want to talk or spend any time with me. She can't see that keeping the grandkids that much has interfered with our relationship with each other.

We are about to separate because I don't want to live my last few years with someone I can't hold or kiss and who doesn't want to hold or kiss me because she's so irritated and frustrated by the time the kids leave. She doesn't want to be bothered. She just sits in her recliner and goes to sleep.

There's plenty of love, loyalty and trust between us, but after eight years of no intimacy, I think I have waited long enough. I have tried talking to her about it many times. She says she has lost her desire, but she can't see the reason is because she's having that same bad day, every day. Any advice before I finalize this?

HAD IT IN ALABAMA

DEAR HAD IT: I am glad you wrote. There may be more than one reason your wife's energy and sex drive have disappeared. You state that there is plenty of love, loyalty and trust between you. Please suggest to her that she consult her doctor and ask to have her hormone levels checked.

I can't help wondering how old your grandchildren are and why she is expected to take care of them for 11 to 12 hours a day. It may simply be too much for her. However, a thyroid issue or a decrease in estrogen may also be contributing to her exhaustion. If that's the case, there are medical solutions available if your wife is willing to explore them.

Your marriage is worth fighting for, and I hope your wife will see the wisdom before she or your relationship collapses under the weight of the responsibility she has taken on.

DEAR ABBY: I am a 74-year-old woman who has no surviving immediate family. I have two cousins who are still living. One of them is my age and, to this day, may not know he was adopted as a baby. I discovered it when I was very young and snooped through my mother's nightstand drawer. I mentioned it to my aunt (his adoptive mother) 30 years ago, and she made me promise not to ever tell him. Is it best to let him live his entire life not knowing, or should I somehow bring it up to him?

COUSIN WHO WANTS THE BEST FOR HIM

DEAR COUSIN: I will assume that both of your cousin's parents are deceased. How do you think he will feel when you announce that his entire life has been a lie? Do you think he will be warmly greeted and accepted by siblings who never knew he existed? I know you are eager to tell him the truth, but "the truth" is that his parents are the people who raised him. At this late date, I think it would be better to keep the promise you gave to your aunt rather than disrupt your cousin's life.

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COMMENTARY

Trump's national security strategy is on target

BY TERENCE P. JEFFREY

When former President George W. Bush stood on the West Front of the Capitol for his second inauguration in 2005, he gave a speech that called for a utopian foreign policy that aimed at spreading democracy all across the globe.

"We are led, by events and common sense, to one conclusion: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands," he said. "The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world."

"So it is the policy of the United States," Bush declared, "to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world."

"America, in this young century, proclaims liberty throughout all the world and to all the inhabitants thereof," Bush concluded. "Renewed in our strength, tested but not weary, we are ready for the greatest achievements in the history of freedom."

Did Bush succeed in this quest? No.

During his presidency, the United States was involved in two wars. The first was a necessary response to the evil Sept. 11, 2001, al-Qaeda terrorist attacks on the United States. Those attacks required the United States to invade Afghanistan, where the Taliban regime had given sanctuary to al-Qaeda.

The second war was one of choice. This was the invasion of Iraq. In October 2002, Congress passed a resolution authorizing Bush to use military force against Iraq based on the premise that Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein was "continuing to possess and develop a significant chemical and biological weapons capability," was "actively seeking a nuclear weapons capability," and was "supporting and harboring terrorist organizations."

In 2004, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence published a report revealing that the intelligence estimates upon which the Iraq War was based were inaccurate.

"The major key judgments in the NIE (National Intelligence Estimate), particularly that Iraq 'is reconstituting its nuclear program,' 'has chemical and biological weapons,' was developing an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) 'probably intended to deliver biological warfare agents,' and that 'all key aspects — research & development (R&D), production, and weaponization — of Iraq's offensive biological weapons (BW) program are active and that most elements are larger and more advanced than they were before the Gulf War,' either overstated, or were not supported by, the underlying intelligence reporting provided to the Committee," the report said.

"The assessment that Iraq 'is reconstituting its nuclear program' was not supported by the intelligence provided to the Committee," it said.

What about the alleged ties between Saddam's regime and al-Qaeda?

"Secretary [of State Colin] Powell did not describe, and the Intelligence Community never concluded that there was, cooperation between Iraq and al Qaeda on terrorist operations, nor did they actively support each other with resources or personnel," said the report. "Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda are not natural allies; far from it, they are natural foes. Secular Arab regimes like Saddam Hussein's were threatened by religious fundamentalists like those within al Qaeda."

After engaging in the necessary war in Afghanistan and the unnecessary war in Iraq, Bush's vision of spreading freedom and democracy around the globe failed in these nations.

The governments in both these countries continue to abuse basic human rights, according to the State Department.

"The human rights situation in Iraq worsened during the year due to increased federal government restrictions on fundamental freedoms and civic space," says the latest State Department report on human rights in Iraq, which covers 2024.

Specifically, the report says that in Iraq there were "credible reports" of "arbitrary or unlawful killings; disappearances; torture" and "arbitrary arrest and detention." There were also "restrictions on freedom of expression and media freedom."

The State Department's 2023 report on religious freedom in Iraq noted that "(r)estrictions on freedom of religion remained widespread outside the Iraqi Kurdistan Region."

The Taliban regime in Afghanistan engaged in similar human rights abuses, according to the State Department's 2024 report on that country. As in Iraq, the State Department said there were "arbitrary and unlawful killings; disappearances" and "torture." The Taliban also put "serious restrictions on freedom of expression and media freedom," as well as "restrictions on religious freedom."

These nations did not become the freedom-protecting democracies Bush envisioned.

President Donald Trump last week released a report defining his own national security strategy. It does not call for spreading democracies across the globe.

"In everything we do, we are putting America First," Trump said in the introduction to this strategy.

"The purpose of foreign policy is the protection of core national interests; that is the sole focus of this strategy," said Trump's report.

"Yet the affairs of other countries are our concern only if their activities directly threaten our interests," it says.

"Our elites badly miscalculated America's willingness to shoulder forever global burdens to which the American people saw no connection to the national interest," it says.

What are the primary interests of the American people that our government needs to protect?

"First and foremost," says Trump's report, "we want the continued survival and safety of the United States as an independent, sovereign republic whose government secures the God-given natural rights of its citizens and prioritizes their well-being and interests.

"We want to protect this country, its people, its territory, its economy, and its way of life from military attack and hostile foreign influence, whether espionage, predatory trade practices, drug and human trafficking, destructive propaganda and influence operations, cultural subversion, or any other threat to our nation," it says.

This is exactly what the national security strategy of the United States should be.

To find out more about Terence P. Jeffrey and read features by other Creators writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators webpage at www.creators.com.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

GOD IS THE ORIGIN OF BOTH KINDS OF JOY

Hope, peace, joy and love are four realities we celebrate during the four Sundays of Advent in many churches. Of course these four words are not in any way exclusive to those who follow Christ. In fact, much of world religion and philosophy is rooted in these words, directly or indirectly. This year I have been looking into the writings of the Apostle Paul while trying to encourage the folks at Bethany Baptist Church where I preach on Sundays.

In each of these four words, whether in Greek, which uses several words to convey what English conveys in the one word, love, or in comparison to the other three words which basically use one word in both languages, we find that all of the four words we celebrate during Advent have very distinct meanings in the world, and within the faith.

Let me illustrate with the word joy, and remember, the same case can be made for all four words. There is the joy that we have when our team wins, and the joy of a new job, or car, or house. We also know the joy of weddings, babies, graduations, as well as the joy we see when our dog wags her tail. Essentially joy is all around us all the time except when it isn't. All of the illustrations of joy I just listed are temporary in one way or another. They have a starting point and an ending point. Our team will lose. One degree will be superseded by another. A new car can be wrecked or simply give up the ghost, so to speak! And so it goes with life, and with our joy.

The Apostle Paul knew this kind of joy. As a human being, he had experienced and was still experiencing that kind of joy as he wrote his letters to the churches. But he also knew a different kind of joy, the kind of joy his Lord was describing when He said, "My joy I give unto you, not as the world gives, give I unto you." Of course this was the joy of the Kingdom of God. It is the Christmas joy of the incarnation of Christ which is celebrated in nativities all over the world.

Paul encountered this joy when he was not expecting it. As an enemy of Christians, he was on his way to persecute them, when, as C. S. Lewis would say, he was "Surprised by joy!" The surprise came as a surprise because Paul had spent most of his life following a tradition that had brought him no real joy but frustration at not being able to keep all the rules in his head or in practice. Sadly people of the book whether the Old Testament or both Testaments have more often than not confused the joy of the world with the joy of God. They are not the same, but they are rooted in the truth that God must be the origin of both kinds of joy.

A very simple question is this: Do you know and celebrate the joy of God or not? For you see, that kind of joy, His joy, will never leave you high and dry. You might misplace or forget His joy for a moment or even a season, but His joy will never leave or forsake you. It cannot because He will not. Think of it like this: As Mary looked into the tiny face of Jesus she felt great joy, but as she looked intently into the very eyes of God, she could not help but feel a touch of the joy she one day would know when she knew Him as her only Lord and Savior. And so, we joyfully say, Merry Christmas, and even better, "Joy to the World, the Lord is come…!"

JAMES R. CHANDLER JR.
Sumter

COMMENTARY

Cornbread's Law : Protecting animals and people

BY DANA FUCHS

Imagine being starved and tortured — then being thrown in a burn pit and left to die. In Sumter County, that was the horrific fate of a tiny defenseless dog, the valiant rescue group Hounds in Pounds named "Cornbread." Although Hounds in Pounds and the emergency vet staff did all they could to save his life — Cornbread didn't make it.

Unfortunately, Cornbread's fate is not uncommon. According to multi-media reports, South Carolina has seen a disturbing increase in animal abuse cases — including those that result from dogfighting. The rise in animal cruelty cases is occurring in a context of lax animal protection laws and enforcement.

Sadly, if an animal abuser does receive a just sentence for their depraved acts — parole boards can enable more abuse by giving a hardcore abuser an early release. A particularly appalling example is the man deemed "The Kingpin of Dogfighting" in South Carolina. Originally sentenced to forty years, the parole board released him after only six, according to CBS News.

His 47 victims — who suffered horrifically — were all deemed unsavable and killed by the shelter who took them in. Not one life was spared. Yet, their abuser got the mercy he never showed innocent animals.

To combat the various forms of egregious violence against animals — I propose Cornbread's Law. If these suggested policies and regulations are implemented, the Palmetto State would go from one of the worst states for animal protection to one of the best.

CORNBREAD'S LAW

1. Increases the maximum penalty from five years in prison to ten for felony animal cruelty.

2. Those convicted of felony animal cruelty shall receive a life-long ban from owning, breeding, or training animals.

3. All found guilty of felony animal cruelty shall be required to receive a mental health evaluation and mandatory counseling.

4. All veterinarians shall be mandated to report animal abuse to the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED).

5. A state-wide animal abuse registry shall be created.

6. The maximum fine of 5000 dollars for felony animal cruelty shall be increased to 10,000. A portion of these fines shall be used to build a dogfighting healing center in the Pee Dee region. According to WBTW, SLED reported 43% of dogfighting investigations occur in this area. Given their physical and emotional wounds, it is often difficult for shelters or rescue groups to accept dogs used in fights on short notice. The remaining fees shall be used to increase SLED funding.

7. Breeders shall be licensed, regulated, and animals, and their living conditions, shall be inspected. Failure to pass inspection (based on inhumane conditions or ill treatment of animals) shall result in a life-long ban from breeding any animal in the state.

Stronger animal cruelty laws not only protect animals but human beings as well. An *fbi.gov* animal cruelty article stated, "Recent research shows a well-documented link that is predictive or co-occurring crime against humans (including intimate partners, children, and elders) and is associated with other types of violent crimes." The authors also noted that, "animal cruelty is a better predictor of sexual abuse compared to a history of homicide, or weapon convictions."

South Carolina's powerful state motto is Dum Spiro Spero, meaning, while I breathe, I hope. Cornbread no longer breathes because nobody protected him. Yet, his legacy can live on — and save other animal victims still clinging to life — if this law, in his honor, is passed.

South Carolinians, in every facet of life — animals save you. Have the grace to support legislation that will do the same for them.

Dana Fuchs is a writer and animal advocate living in New York. She can be reached at animalwriter25@mail.com.

HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY? Send your letter to *letters@theitem.com*, drop it off at *The Sumter Item* office, 36 W. Liberty St., or mail it to *The Sumter Item*, P.O. Box 1677, Sumter, SC 29151, along with the writer's full name, address and telephone number (for verification purposes only). Letters that exceed 350 words will be cut accordingly in the print edition, but available in their entirety at *www.theitem.com/opinion/letters_to_editor.*





Toni McCray tries to help organize tiny dancers dressed as puppies, seen again at right, during the dress rehearsal on Thursday evening.



30 years of being holly, jolly with 'Jingle with the Arts'

BY ALAYSHA MAPLE
alaysha@theitem.com



PHOTOS BY MICAH GREEN / THE SUMTER ITEM

Members of the Sumter High Show Choir perform at Jingle with the Arts' dress rehearsal on Thursday evening at Patriot Hall.

Three decades of singing and dancing across the stage were celebrated Friday-Saturday, Dec. 12-13, for Sumter Civic Dance Company and Sumter High School Show Choir's 30th-annual "Jingle with the Arts."

The two creative groups first joined for the hometown holiday performance in 1995 when dance company founder Andrea Freed-Levenson and then-show choir director Sonja Sepulveda sought to bring Radio City's Christmas Show in New York down South, adding that Southern flair that only Sumter possesses.

Freed-Levenson gathered her dancers from Sumter Civic Dance Company and Sepulveda queued her singers from the Sumter High Show Choir. Together, they put on a performance that was both invigorating and inspiring to their audience. So much so that it kept them coming back year after year.

"This is our 30th year, so I think it's really exciting that people still want to come, still want to perform and with my original that we did this together; I think that's just awesome," Freed-Levenson shared. "And turning it over to Andrea and Herbert, nothing is better."

"It was just a big production, and people loved it," Sepulveda said. "I couldn't have had a better friend than this lady [Freed-Levenson] right here. And these people [Andrea Govier and Herbert Johnson], not only are they students, but they're wonderful friends. Them continuing [Jingle with the Arts] is probably the highest compliment that any teacher can ever have."

Now with their proteges, Govier and Johnson, at the helm, they have added wood to the fire to keep the holiday tradition alive, well and still bringing warmth to the hearts of all who attend.

"We were both in the first one. I was 15 in the very first Jingle with the Arts in '95. We were puppies," Govier said with a smile.

"It's a beautiful honor to carry on the mantle now in a different role as directors," Johnson expressed. "It's such an honor."

This 30th anniversary was extra special, as a few familiar faces returned to the stage. Show choir alumni returned to perform holiday classics "Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer," "Old Toy Trains," "O Holy Night" and others. The Civic Dance Company was back where it began for them, performing choreography from decades ago.

Things were different decades ago — very little tech, simple lighting and sets that may not have been as grandiose as the one perched on stage today. But what has remained steadfast is the love that is poured into making this a show that performers can be proud of and families walk away from feeling holly, jolly and whole.

"It has become many people's family tradition. It actually starts their season for them to come out and see all the beautiful dancing and singing," Sepulveda shared. "We're proud to be part of people's family tradition."



Caitlin Stewart helps tiny dancers jump through a wreath to get on stage during Jingle with the Arts' dress rehearsal on Thursday evening at Patriot Hall.



A song is performed at Jingle with the Arts during a dress rehearsal on Thursday evening at Patriot Hall.

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Get your last-minute shopping in at the Christmas Market at Patriot Hall on Saturday, get tickets for 'Ring in the Brew Year'

To make a submission to our events list, email *pressrelease@theitem.com* with EVENTS in the subject line.

SUMTER COUNTY

Each year at Christmas, Swan Lake Iris Gardens sparkles with 1 million lights, and this year is no different. **Fantasy of Lights,** South Carolina's largest free Christmas lights display continues through December: Sundays-Thursdays until 9 p.m. and Fridays and Saturdays until 10 p.m. The event is designed as a drive-through, but visitors are allowed to park to take photos. Access to the walking trails is closed after dusk. Lights are displayed along the main parking lot area to the gardens, along Liberty Street and along Garden Street (enter at Liberty Street and exit onto Oakland Avenue). No parking is allowed along Garden Street; however, parking will be available in the lot across from the Heath Pavilion. Santa's Village, located on the Visitors Center lawn, is a part of the holiday celebration. Children can take photos with the big guy (bring your own camera). For more info, call the Visitors Center at (803) 426-2640.

Kay Diamonds Master Thee Arts will bring your favorite princesses to life in the dazzling holiday dance show **"The Enchanted Christmas Book" Christmas Recital**. Doors open at 6 p.m., and the showcase will begin at 7 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 19, at Patriot Hall, 135 Haynsworth St. Tickets can be purchased at *https://tinyurl.com/mrr2n8ff*.

On the last weekend before Christmas, there's another opportunity to find the perfect gift for all your favorite people — and plenty of entertainment to enjoy, too. On Saturday, Dec. 20, head to the **Christmas Market at Patriot Hall** from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Everything from handcrafted decor items to jewelry, art, gift baskets, apparel, cosmetics and more will be on sale. Families can also enjoy entertainment, food and more. Patriot Hall is at 135 Haynsworth St.

Got some free time during the winter holidays? **Hear a story told by Elise at Sumter County Library's Wesmark branch** every Wednesday from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Visit the library at 180 W. Wesmark Blvd. through the end of the year and into 2026 each Wednesday morning for Storytime @ Wesmark. If you love dogs and a good book, you can also visit the downtown Sumter library branch and **read to therapy dogs** at 11 a.m. on the second Saturday of every month, Jan. 10 and Feb. 14 this winter.

Sumter Original Brewery is inviting everyone to **"Ring in the Brew Year"** at the downtown venue with DJ Howie. You must be 21 or older to enjoy this New Year's Eve party. Doors open at 7 p.m., and the music starts at 8 p.m. Get your tickets at *https://tinyurl.com/ux8pnt6e*. The brewery is at 2 S. Main St.

Celebrate the purpose of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday during the **27th Sumter County Dreamwalk,** sponsored and organized by Central Carolina Technical College, Morris College and USC Sumter. This year's event will take place on Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2026, from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at USC Sumter campus' Nettles Building, 200 Miller Road. There will be a program of celebration followed by a 3-mile walk. This event is free and open to the public. Registration will be held beginning at 8:30, and no RSVP is necessary.

Getting married next year or know someone who is? Visit the **Ruach Bridal and Special Event Show** on Sunday, Jan. 25, from 2 to 6 p.m. Talk with vendors from throughout South Carolina and watch a fashion show at Ruach Banquet Meeting Facility, 245 Oswego Hwy., Sumter. Buy tickets at *https://tinyurl.com/ycx8y9ka*.

National Enduro Championship – Round 1 is heading to the woods this February. The 2026 American National Enduro Championship kicks off Feb. 7-8 in Manchester State Forest for two days of motorcycle racing. "Top pro and amateur riders from across the country will battle the sand, roots and pine woods in this nationally sanctioned event, giving spectators plenty of high-speed action and skillful riding to watch. A great weekend outing for motorsports fans and anyone who wants to experience one of the country's premier enduro rounds in our own backyard." The park is at 6740 Headquarters Road, Wedgefield. Find more information about the event at *www.serma.club* closer to the event dates.

FLORENCE

Tickets are on sale now for **Monster Jam** at Florence Center, 3300 W. Radio Drive, Florence, on April 11-12, 2026. This unscripted, heart-pumping event features 12,000-pound trucks standing on two wheels, flying through the air, performing gravity-defying stunts and more. The world's best drivers will battle for the Arena Championship Series East title in three competitions: Racing, 2 Wheel Skills and Freestyle. The day of fun starts at the Monster Jam Pit Party on Saturday and Sunday featuring selfies with the trucks, high-fives and autographs from drivers and family-friendly activities. And there's no better way to get ready for the action than Monster Jam Trackside, happening about an hour before the event. It's packed with driver interviews, pit crew sneak peeks and epic giveaways that'll get everyone pumped up before the action begins.

Show times are:

Saturday, April 11 — Event Time, noon and 6 p.m.; Pit Party open from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. (Event Ticket & Pit Party Pass required for entry)

Sunday, April 12 — Event time, 3 p.m.; Pit Party open from 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. (Event Ticket & Pit Party Pass required for entry)

Visit *MonsterJam.com* for more information.

LAKE CITY

Looking to be immersed in the season? **Step into Jingle Bell Journey,** "a one-of-a-kind interactive Christmas experience that brings imagination, creativity and holiday joy to life!" presented by ArtFields and Hometown Holidays. What begins in a cozy living room complete with a fireplace, twinkling tree and tiny Christmas village quickly transforms into something extraordinary. Step through the fireplace, and suddenly, you're elf-sized, exploring the enchanting world inside the village beneath the tree. Visitors of all ages will delight in exploring themed playhouses, each filled with art, storytelling and hands-on fun: Sweet Shoppe, Library, Post Office, Art Gallery, Green House, Toy Store and more. Visit the Jingle Bell Journey at Jones-Carter Gallery, 105 Henry St., Lake City, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Dec. 20. Admission is free, but donations are encouraged to support local nonprofits.

COLUMBIA

The Winter Jam 2026 Tour, founded and produced by Newsong and promoted in partnership with TPR, will launch Jan. 9, 2026, at Colonial Life Arena, 801 Lincoln St., Columbia. Known as Christian music's largest annual tour, Winter Jam 2026 will feature performances by Chris Tomlin, Matthew West, Katy Nichole, Hulvey, Disciple, Emerson Day and Newsong, along with speaker Zane Black. "We are in a moment in our country … one of revival and awakening that is being sparked by young people. Each night of Winter Jam is an opportunity to experience how God is continuing to move and use this generation," shared Tomlin. Known for its "no ticket required" approach, Winter Jam continues its long-standing tradition of affordability and accessibility, with admission only a $15 donation at the door. Fans can also join Jam Nation for free and early admission, exclusive merchandise and opportunities to connect directly with artists during select Q&A sessions. Fans can find more information and Jam Nation registration at *jamtour.com*.

NOTICE OF FILING

Act No. 41 of 2025 and S.C. Code Ann. Section 58-42-30 and the Establishment of Competitive Procurement Programs for Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC and Duke Energy Progress, LLC for Energy Storage Facilities to Be Located in South Carolina
Docket No. 2025-217-E

Why is this Notice Important?

- Pursuant to Commission Order No. 2025-636, on November 21, 2025, Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC ("DEC") and Duke Energy Progress, LLC ("DEP") (jointly, the "Companies") filed an Application for Approval of Proposal for Competitive Procurement of South Carolina-Sited Energy Storage Resources under Act 41 of 2025 ("Stage 1 Application") with the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (the "Commission").
- The Stage 1 Application requests approval of the Companies' initial proposal for biennial competitive procurement of South Carolina-Sited energy storage resources and it includes proposed conceptual design of the procurement process and key concepts.
- If the Stage 1 Application is approved by the Commission, the Companies will file a Stage 2 Application which will include the planned Request for Proposals document.

Must the Companies Conduct a Competitive Procurement for Stand-Alone Energy Storage Facilities?

- The Companies must conduct competitive procurements of South Carolina-sited transmission-connected energy storage resources of more than 20 megawatts.

What are the Companies' Target Procurement Volume for Stand-Alone Energy Storage Acquisition?

- The Companies' "target procurement volume for stand-alone [energy] storage acquisition may not exceed the portion of stand-alone storage in the most recent commission approved integrated resource plan or integrated resource plan annual update that is equal to the portion of the respective electrical utility's peak load attributable to South Carolina customers." (S.C. Code Ann. §58-42-30(A)(2))
  - In the Companies' service territories, South Carolina retail customers account for approximately twenty percent (20%) of system load in the years considered for this case.
  - The Companies seek to competitively procure 150MW of South Carolina-sited stand-alone energy storage resource.

ENERGY STORAGE OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS (see Attachment 3 of Application for entire document)	
Facility Design	Minimum POI (point of interconnection) size of 20 MWac; 4-hour battery duration; Lithium-ion based batteries; grid charging equals same rate as battery maximum export rating
Planned Outages	During the months of April, May or October, unless otherwise agreed to by the Buyer
Storage Availability Guarantee	The contract will include an annual storage availability calculation

The case was filed according to Commission Order No. 2025-636, South Carolina Energy Security Act of 2025 ("Act 41") at S.C. Code Ann. §§ 58-42-10, 58-42-30, 58-27-820, and 58-3-140(A), and S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 103-823.

For the entire Case visit: https://dms.psc.sc.gov/Web/Dockets/Detail/119440

Who Can I Talk to About This Notice?

Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC and Duke Energy Progress, LLC	803-988-7132

Office of Regulatory Staff	803-737-5230 or 1-800-922-1531
Department of Consumer Affairs	803-734-4200 or 1-800-922-1594
Public Service Commission	803-896-5100

How Can I Participate in this Case?

A stakeholder may participate in the case by the ways listed below.

Option A: File a Letter of Protest by

- Emailing the completed Letter of Protest to contact@psc.sc.gov; or
- Mailing the completed Letter of Protest to 101 Executive Center Drive, Suite 100, Columbia, SC 29210.

More information is available here: https://psc.sc.gov/consumer-info/file-letter-protest

Option B:

File a Petition to Intervene. An Intervenor becomes a party in the case. Intervenors have the right to testify, cross-examine witnesses, seek reconsideration of the Commission's Final Decision, and must follow the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure. To intervene, you must:

- Email a Petition to Intervene to contact@psc.sc.gov no later than **Friday, January 9, 2026;** or
- Mail a Petition to Intervene to 101 Executive Center Drive, Suite 100, Columbia, SC 29210 no later than **Friday, January 9, 2026**. Please include your email address.

**You must give a copy of your Petition to Intervene to all Parties in this case. Petitions to Intervene must meet the requirements of Commission Regulation 103-825 and must be approved by the Commission.

Pursuant to Commission Order No. 2025-636, the Office of Regulatory Staff's and All Other Parties' Comments regarding the Companies' Application are due **Thursday, January 15, 2026** and the Companies' Reply Comments are due **Thursday, January 29, 2026**.

A Commission Staff Procedural Status Conference is scheduled to begin at **11:00 a.m. on Monday, February 2, 2026.**

In the above referenced case, if the proposed tariffs contain any request for a change of rates, the proposed rates may be changed by the Commission.

Persons seeking further information about these procedures should contact the Commission at **803-896-5100** or visit its website at www.psc.sc.gov.

December 5, 2025
PJM





JINGLEFEST

FROM PAGE A1

who showcased their nifty crafts and unique creations. Some grabbed a bite as they browsed, and others settled in at the sight of performances from Sumter High School Show Choir and Miss Libby's School of Dance. In between the search for the perfect gift and the musical merriment, attendees got creative at two free craft tables, one provided by Liberty STEAM Charter School.

Many snuggled up to Santa, sharing specifics of the grandiose gifts they hoped would await them come Christmas morning before giving PKC Photography their best smile to solidify the moment.

All proceeds from the photo-op benefited *The Item*'s Fireside Fund, established in 1969 to support Sumter United Ministries and provide crucial heating assistance to families in need during the cold months, having raised more than $1 million to date.

Proceeds from Saturday totaled $593.54, which will be donated in the name of JingleFest attendees.

The day wouldn't have been possible without the support of our sponsors: Prisma Health Tuomey, Simpson Hardware and Sporting Goods, DJ Howie D Entertainment, PKC Photography and USC Sumter.

With more than 500 people coming together in celebration, *The Item*'s first-ever holiday event exceeded expectations and set the tone for what has the potential to become a beloved holiday tradition.

Filled with merriment, kindness and community pride, the event was a heartfelt reminder that the holidays are best when celebrated together and that small acts of generosity can make a meaningful difference.



ABIGAIL PITTMAN / THE SUMTER ITEM

The Sumter Item held its first JingleFest, a Christmas market presented by Prisma Health Tuomey, at USC Sumter on Saturday, Dec. 13. The market included craft and gift vendors, a reading corner, photos with Santa, performances by local groups, food trucks and more family fun.



MICAH GREEN / THE SUMTER ITEM

Ava and Kenzie Larson make ornaments at the Liberty STEAM table during the The Sumter Item's JingleFest at USC Sumter on Saturday.



MICAH GREEN / THE SUMTER ITEM

A portion of the Sumter High School Show Choir performs during The Sumter Item's JingleFest at USC Sumter on Saturday.



ABIGAIL PITTMAN / THE SUMTER ITEM



ABIGAIL PITTMAN / THE SUMTER ITEM



ABIGAIL PITTMAN / THE SUMTER ITEM





ENERGY FROM PAGE A1

risky than being another investor-owned company on the stock market.

"If you're struggling to pay your bills, you know, what's the first thing that you're going to pay? It's probably your light bill, right?" Hall said. "It's a low-risk investment for utility companies."

The Public Service Commission of South Carolina is a quasi-judicial body that oversees utility requests for rate increases. Duke Energy's application in June 2025 kicked off a months-long process including public hearings to garner customer feedback in September. Ultimately, negotiations between many of this docket's intervening parties and Duke Energy culminated in settling agreements that this final PSC order named "approved in its entirety."

"The rates, fees, and charges set forth," the order reads, "are fair and reasonable and will allow DEP to provide its customers with reliable and high-quality electric service."

The new rates will take effect on Feb. 1, 2026.

"Overall, we're satisfied with the outcome given what Duke requested initially," Hall said, though residential rates were higher than what SCDCA recommended.

Ryan Mosier, spokesperson for Duke Energy Corp., stated via email, "This outcome will support our efforts to diversify and enhance our system and continue our track record of operational excellence while keeping costs to customers as low as possible."

He continued, "We appreciate the parties involved in the settlement thoughtfully considering the needs of our customers and our ability to continue investing in our state's booming economy."

Beyond this case, rising electricity rates reflect a statewide and national trend. Between September 2001 and September 2025, the average monthly retail price of residential electricity about doubled in South Carolina, rising from 7.68 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh) to about 15.34 cents per (kWh), according to U.S. Energy Information Administration data. During this time period, South Carolina rates remained about 14% lower than the national average, which rose from 8.92 cents per (kWh) to 18.07 cents per (kWh).

Hall said because of his office's size and resource limitations, it has to hone in on about four aspects of a rate case, maximum, while a case can include dozens of issues.

"There's lots of materials to review and look at, lots of witness testimony," he explained.

The final order alone for Duke was ultimately almost 200 pages, and issues addressed within included data centers and coal ash environmental compliance costs, for instance.

Another upcoming PSC case that SCDCA is intervening on is for TOCE SC Solar 1 LLC, a company applying to install a 1,700-square-foot solar farm in Sumter County. This case will have its next public hearing in March 2026 at Patriot Hall in Sumter. Hall said for these cases, his agency reads the letters of protest that are filed and attends all public hearings where consumers speak out about affordability and quality of service. Hall said that public input factors into its final testimony before the PSC.

Hall said customers who want to understand these complex dockets, in which one expert testimony full of industry jargon can easily include dozens of pages, can contact his office.

"We're happy to discuss cases to help people understand those filings," he said.

BONUSES FROM PAGE A1

it is a move in the right direction.

Seventh-grade English language arts teacher Lynne Nelson said that she was excited, especially because teachers do not make great pay.

"I am thinking of all the bills I can pay off to make it easier on me," she said. "And I am going to be able to spoil my grandchildren for Christmas, and my children. I always start early, but now I can buy a little extra stuff. I am so excited. They took a picture of me, and I already texted my whole family."

Nelson also commended Bates Principal Nicole Fuller and said that she is the best principal she has worked for in her 25-year career.

"She doesn't mind getting in the trenches with us," she said. "When we are having problems, she will come down and help us. Whether it is with a student, an issue with our curriculum or anything, she is always open, and she is very welcoming to any ideas we have. She is more than happy to let us try new concepts and give her feedback. A lot of principals are not like that, but she is very open to allow us to try new things that we feel will help the kids be successful."

Nelson added that the school works well as a good team.

"This is the best school that I have worked at," she added. "We are like a good, solid family, and we back each other up."



PHOTOS BY ABIGAIL PITTMAN / THE SUMTER ITEM

Bates Middle School eighth-grade math teacher Corelle Fair receives a hug on Friday, Dec. 12, after receiving a check for $27,527.04 as part of the new performance-based bonus initiative organized by the state Department of Education.





ABOVE: A Bates Middle School cheerleader performs during the school's Academic Pep Rally on Dec. 12. The rally recognized eight teachers who received performance-based bonuses for meeting and exceeding growth benchmarks with students in the spring on state testing.

ABOVE RIGHT: Bates Middle School seventh-grade math teacher Stacy Williams stands in celebration after it was announced that she received $13,763.52 as part of the state Department of Education's Strategic Compensation Pilot Grant Program on Friday, Dec. 12, at the school.

BY THE NUMBERS

S.C.'s Strategic Compensation Pilot Grant Program

$2,500,000
Amount awarded this fall across state with program

37
Total schools in state awarded through program

$121,514.04
Total amount awarded to eight Bates Middle teachers

8
Bates Middle teachers awarded in program

$6,300
Average individual teacher award across state to recipients

1
Sumter School District school (Bates) selected for program this fall

400
Total teachers awarded through program this fall

Sources: S.C. Department of Education, Sumter School District

FIRESIDE FROM PAGE A1

to heat his home. Thankfully, we were able to help him.

He was not alone.

We interviewed several more people for kerosene who had similar circumstances, including a woman in her late 70s who needed a propane delivery. Her daughter lives with her to assist her, but a recent medical condition has created a complicated dynamic. The daughter needs more autonomy, but the mother is struggling to let go of control of the household finances. With escalating medical bills, their budget does not have room for the entire expense of a propane delivery. We were able to offer a portion of the assistance needed.

She was not alone.

We had several more requests for propane.

I have worked here long enough to know the weather pattern by how busy we become. Many people need help to stay warm, and Sumter United Ministries is a welcome place that will hear them and help them.

You, too, can know whether your help is needed simply feeling the cold around you. Others are feeling it, too, often with less resources and resolutions to combat it. When you contribute to the Fireside Fund, you enable us to continue to encourage and provide for those in need. Thank you for sharing!

Kevin Howell is the director of the Crisis Relief Ministry at Sumter United Ministries.

2025-26 FIRESIDE FUND HONOREE

Each year, *The Sumter Item* chooses a member of the community who has passed away in the last year whose support, whether through work, advocacy, leadership, philanthropy or community activism, has made a positive impact.

This year, *The Item* is dedicating the Fireside Fund to Katy Greenawalt, Sumter United Ministries' founding director.

According to previous reporting from *The Sumter Item* after her passing: "Born in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Greenawalt met her husband, retired Lt. Col. USAF Rodgers Kenyon Greenawalt, in the summer of 1965 in Maryland, and they were married in 1967. She was an active part of her community and served on the Sumter Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, was the director of Bethel Baptist preschool and kindergarten, and, of course, she was one of the driving forces behind the success of Sumter United Ministries.

"... Greenawalt began as a volunteer, as many people do when a nonprofit is just starting out, and as she directed SUM, she set its groundwork. The ministry may stand without her physically in it today, but it will never truly be without her; she makes up SUM's foundation, and more than a trace of her is present in the now-decades-old practices that she first came up with."

She died on May 3 at the age of 77.

"We are very grateful for *The Sumter Item* and The Fireside Fund for partnering with Sumter United Ministries again this year," SUM Executive Director Mark Champagne said, who remembers Greenawalt as his mentor, according to *The Item*'s article on her this spring. "... Her steadfast leadership and remarkable creativity laid the foundation on which this ministry still stands. She built systems with excellence, served with compassion and believed fiercely in the potential of every person who walked through our doors. She would see the hope in them long before they saw it themselves. She loved people deeply and followed her Savior with unwavering devotion, leading this ministry through her faith and her heart. Her legacy continues to guide and strengthen Sumter United Ministries today and will always be fondly remembered — please give and keep Katy's legacy going strong."

New donations as of Dec. 16: Renee Baird - in memory of Michael "Woody" Baird, $100; Janette Sisk - Merry Christmas to all, $100; Marie Burns - in memory of Gregory Burns, $100; Bethany Bible Class, First Presbyterian Church in Sumter, $267; Sumter Methodist Church, Adult Sunday School - in memory of Katy Greenawalt, $500; Jack Osteen - in honor of the Mt. Vernon Coffee Club, $250; First Presbyterian Church, First Presbyterian Women, $505; Hugh Stoddard Jr., $50; Honey Truesdale - in memory of Harold Truesdale, $100; JingleFest attendees, $493.54; and Jack Osteen - in honor of The Sumter Item staff, $100.

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE

Donations can be mailed to:

The Sumter Item
P.O. Box 1677
Sumter, SC 29151

Drop off donations:

The Sumter Item is located at 36 W. Liberty St.

Donate online

CashApp – $SUMdonate

Zeffy – *https://tinyurl.com/2densutv*

*This option is free for nonprofits and donor fee is optional

Square – *https://square.link/u/Wvt5yLTR*

PayPal – *https://tinyurl.com/bdekdsks*

What to include:

Names, including groups, should be spelled completely.

When making a donation in someone's honor, the names will be printed as given.

Checks should be made out to Sumter United Ministries.

DO YOU NEED HEATING HELP?

Anyone in need of assistance with heating or heating utility costs can call Sumter United Ministries at (803) 775-0757.

Zeffy QR code

Square QR code

PayPal QR code

YOUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

$0
Anonymous

$27,427
Total last year

$2,565.54
Total this week

$1,851,103.28
Total since 1969

$7,025.54
Total this year

PUBLIC AGENDA

Due to the holiday season, some of these meeting times may have been changed without notifiying *The Sumter Item.* Please email your meeting dates for 2026 to pressrelease@theitem.com with PUBLIC AGENDA in subject line.

SANTEE WATEREE RTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Monday, Dec. 22, at 6 p.m., 129 S. Harvin St. For special accommodations, call (803) 934-0396, extension 103. For inquiries, email info@swrta.com or mail SWRTA, 129 S. Harvin St., Sumter, SC 29150.

CITY OF MANNING BOARD OF APPEALS

Monday, Dec. 22, 6 p.m., 29 W. Boyce St., City Hall Chambers, Manning

SUMTER COUNTY DISABILITIES & SPECIAL NEEDS BOARD

Tuesday, Dec. 23, 8 a.m., training room of Administrative Building, 750 Electric Drive.

SUMTER COUNTY COUNCIL

Tuesday, Dec. 23, at 6 p.m., Sumter County Council Chambers

AROUND TOWN

To correct any information or to make a submission to Around Town, email *pressrelease@theitem.com* with Around Town in subject line.

Annual screenings for stroke and heart disease risk will be held at Jehovah Missionary Baptist Church, 805 S. Harvin St., Sumter, on Thursday, Jan. 29, 2026. Screenings are easy, painless and noninvasive. All appointments include carotid artery, abdominal aortic aneurysm, atrial fibrillation and peripheral arterial disease screenings. According to the Life Line Screening website, the screenings are affordable without the need for insurance. Call (844) 558-0973. Visit *hearthealth.lifelinescreening.com* to choose the time you'd like to have your screening.

Santa Paws needs your help! Help Sumter SPCA fill the shelter's stockings. If you adopt a pet between Dec. 15 and Dec. 23, you'll get to take home their very own stocking — ready to celebrate their first Christmas with you. Once all the stockings are full, the shelter will distribute the goodies among every pet at the shelter, or you can donate to one special friend's stocking specifically. The shelter is at 1140 S. Guignard Drive.

Calling all who are interested in being community volunteers. If you have a talent, skill or passion you'd love to share with the next generation, The Salvation Army and The Red Shield Youth Center in Sumter could use your help. The group is looking for caring community members to volunteer their time and talents with children. If you play piano, love painting or arts and crafts, can tutor or help with homework, have a skill you'd like to pass along or similar talent, you can make a difference. For more information or to get involved, call (803) 775-9336.

Are you a teacher looking to make a bigger impact in your classroom? A national nonprofit with local roots in Batesburg-Leesville has a unique opportunity for you. The Center of Excellence for Educator Preparation and Innovation's IMPACT initiative is tackling two of education's biggest challenges: teacher retention and student literacy. The program empowers teachers with the tools and strategies to reach each student, individually. Participating teachers receive a quarterly stipend, professional development, and the chance to earn valuable micro-credentials. The EPI Center is currently seeking certified English Language Arts and Elementary Education teachers. This is your chance to transform your classroom and make a real difference. To apply, visit *epipathways.org* or call (854) 222-7243.

The Pietas Coalition will host an Anti-Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Seminar to equip community members with tools to recognize and respond to signs of trafficking every second Wednesday of each month from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at South Sumter Family Resource Center. To learn more, visit *www.pietascoalition.org*.

Need help with having enough to eat or want to help your community from going hungry? Those in need of food assistance in Sumter can contact Sumter United Ministries, which provides a range of services. The ministry is at 36 S. Artillery Drive and can be reached by phone at (803) 775-0757. Its office hours are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Donors can give to the ministry through PayPal or by credit/debit card at its website, *https://sumterunitedministries.org*. Sumter's Salvation Army is asking for nonperishable food donations and is looking for canned goods, dry foods, cereal, rice, pasta, peanut butter and monetary donations. Drop off food at 16 Kendrick St. on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4:30 p.m. Several churches partnering with Harvest Hope may have food available for pickup, including sites in Sumter, Mayesville and Manning. To find them, visit *www.harvesthope.org/get-help* and type in your ZIP code to see where you can go. Harvest Hope also has a donation option at *https://www.harvesthope.org* for those who would like to give money. More food pantries that serve Sumter residents are listed at *https://tinyurl.com/5b49xjx8*.

The Salvation Army Red Shield Youth Center needs supplies to keep its programs strong — snacks, drinks, art and STEM materials and more! Shop our Amazon or Walmart registry at *https://tinyurl.com/382mf899* or *https://tinyurl.com/8h3tc9er*. Prefer to give locally? Donations can be dropped off at the Youth Center (Salvation Army, 16 Kendrick St., Sumter). The kids especially enjoy Doritos, cookies and fruit punch. Every gift — big or small — helps the children learn, play and thrive. Questions? Call (803) 775-9336.

WEATHER

Forecasts and graphics provided by **AccuWeather, Inc.** ©2025

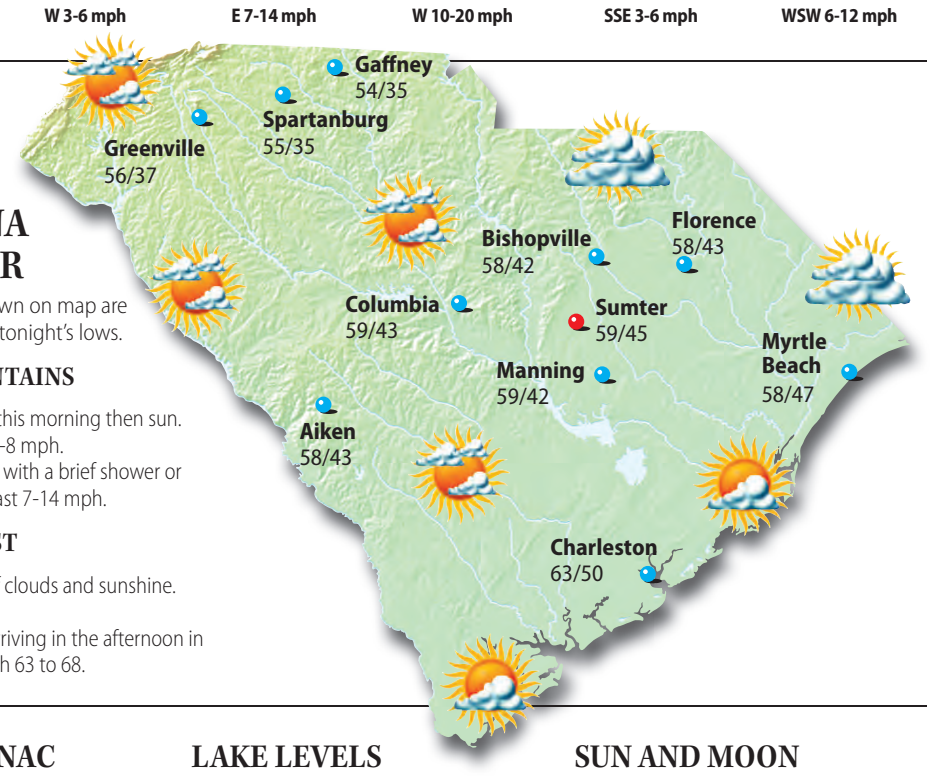
AccuWeather® five-day forecast for Sumter

AccuWeather Proven Superior Accuracy™ Visit AccuWeather.com

TODAY	TONIGHT	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Thickening clouds	Cloudy	Rain; breezy in the afternoon	Mostly sunny and windy	Plenty of sunshine	Mostly sunny and pleasant
59°	45°	59° / 53°	63° / 34°	61° / 42°	67° / 40°
Chance of rain: 0%	Chance of rain: 25%	Chance of rain: 90%	Chance of rain: 25%	Chance of rain: 5%	Chance of rain: 10%
SW 4-8 mph	W 3-6 mph	E 7-14 mph	W 10-20 mph	SSE 3-6 mph	WSW 6-12 mph

TODAY'S SOUTH CAROLINA WEATHER

Temperatures shown on map are today's highs and tonight's lows.



IN THE MOUNTAINS

Today: Some sun this morning then sun. Winds southwest 4-8 mph.
Thursday: Cloudy with a brief shower or two. Winds northeast 7-14 mph.

ON THE COAST

Today: Intervals of clouds and sunshine. High 57 to 64.
Thursday: Rain; arriving in the afternoon in northern parts. High 63 to 68.

LOCAL ALMANAC

SUMTER MONDAY

Temperature	
High	39°
Low	17°
Normal high	57°
Normal low	35°
Record high	79° in 1971
Record low	16° in 1962

Precipitation	
Monday	0.00"
Month to date	1.96"
Normal month to date	1.69"
Year to date	32.62"
Last year to date	35.26"
Normal year to date	46.69"

LAKE LEVELS

Lake	Full pool	7 a.m. yest.	24-hr chg
Murray	360	356.03	+0.03
Marion	76.8	74.85	-0.24
Moultrie	75.5	74.76	-0.22
Wateree	100	95.17	-0.09

RIVER STAGES

River	Flood stage	7 a.m. yest.	24-hr chg
Black River	12	8.23	-0.19
Congaree River	19	3.26	-0.08
Lynches River	14	4.43	-0.28
Saluda River	14	2.43	-1.22
Up. Santee River	80	N.A.	N.A.
Wateree River	24	6.18	+1.22

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise	7:21 a.m.	Sunset	5:15 p.m.
Moonrise	5:21 a.m.	Moonset	3:14 p.m.

New	First	Full	Last
Dec. 19	Dec. 27	Jan. 3	Jan. 10

TIDES

AT MYRTLE BEACH

	High	Ht.	Low	Ht.
Today	7:09 a.m.	3.1	1:13 a.m.	0.3
	7:13 p.m.	2.5	2:05 p.m.	0.4
Thu.	7:50 a.m.	3.1	1:54 a.m.	0.2
	7:55 p.m.	2.5	2:47 p.m.	0.3

NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Thu. Hi/Lo/W
Atlanta	61/47/pc	59/42/sh
Chicago	37/31/pc	46/14/r
Dallas	68/57/pc	66/38/s
Detroit	38/30/pc	47/25/r
Houston	67/61/t	78/43/t
Los Angeles	73/56/s	78/50/pc
New Orleans	65/60/c	74/51/t
New York	43/31/pc	46/45/pc
Orlando	75/60/pc	81/66/pc
Philadelphia	45/29/pc	50/49/pc
Phoenix	77/51/s	78/53/s
San Francisco	59/49/sh	63/51/s
Wash., DC	49/32/pc	50/44/r

REGIONAL CITIES

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Thu. Hi/Lo/W
Asheville	52/33/pc	53/38/c
Athens	58/40/pc	56/43/sh
Augusta	61/42/pc	62/52/sh
Beaufort	59/49/pc	67/61/r
Cape Hatteras	58/47/s	67/62/sh
Charleston	63/50/pc	67/60/r
Charlotte	56/39/pc	54/51/r
Clemson	57/39/pc	53/43/sh
Columbia	59/43/pc	60/54/r
Darlington	57/42/pc	61/57/r
Elizabeth City	56/37/pc	63/58/c
Elizabethtown	57/41/pc	66/59/r
Fayetteville	55/41/pc	64/58/r
Florence	58/43/pc	64/56/r
Gainesville	73/57/pc	75/64/c
Gastonia	55/35/pc	53/48/r
Goldsboro	57/38/pc	64/57/sh
Goose Creek	63/48/pc	66/59/r
Greensboro	51/35/pc	52/47/r
Greenville	56/37/pc	52/45/sh
Hickory	52/35/pc	47/41/sh
Hilton Head	62/51/pc	66/60/r
Jacksonville, FL	68/55/pc	75/61/c
La Grange	61/44/pc	60/42/sh
Macon	60/44/pc	63/50/sh
Marietta	60/42/pc	59/40/sh
Marion	53/31/pc	47/39/r
Mt. Pleasant	64/50/pc	67/60/r
Myrtle Beach	58/47/pc	66/59/r
Orangeburg	60/45/pc	62/54/r
Port Royal	59/50/pc	64/60/r
Raleigh	55/37/pc	60/55/r
Rock Hill	56/38/pc	55/50/r
Rockingham	56/36/pc	60/54/r
Savannah	60/51/c	67/61/c
Spartanburg	55/35/pc	51/44/sh
Summerville	63/47/pc	66/59/r
Wilmington	62/47/c	71/61/r
Winston-Salem	49/36/pc	51/48/r

Weather(W): **s**–sunny, **pc**–partly cloudy, **c**–cloudy, **sh**–showers, **t**–thunderstorms, **r**–rain, **sf**–snow flurries, **sn**–snow, **i**–ice

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SUMTER SPCA PETS OF THE WEEK

ABOVE: Meet Banks, an 8-month-old fixed male who is ready for adoption. This mixed breed boy is ready for a new home for the holidays.



BELOW: Meet Tank, a 7-year-old male, mixed-breed dog available for adoption at Sumter SPCA.



The Sumter SPCA is located at 1140 S. Guignard Drive, (803) 773-9292, and is open 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. every day except Wednesday and Sunday. Visit the website at *www.sumterscspca.com*.

SUMTER ANIMAL CONTROL PETS OF THE WEEK



ABOVE: Chase is the cutest little fellow around! This tiny guy weighs just 12 pounds and is approximately 6 years old. He absolutely loves attention and affection from the volunteers and never turns down a good cuddle. Chase would thrive in a calm, quiet home where he can snuggle up and lounge on the couch all day long. He's a sweet companion who will make an adorable and loving addition to the right family. Chase may take a little time to warm up, but if you're looking for a small dog with a big heart and lots of love to give, Chase may be your perfect match!



BELOW: Pepper is a beautiful girl searching for the perfect match in her forever home. She is sweet, affectionate and loves everyone she meets. Pepper gets along well with other dogs and truly enjoys being part of the family. Pepper does have crate and separation anxiety, so she cannot be crated and will do best in a home where she has full access to the house. A fenced-in yard is a must, along with adopters who are home most of the time or able to minimize the amount of time she is left alone. With the right environment, Pepper will thrive and reward her family with endless love and devotion.

If you're interested in meeting one of these pets at Sumter Animal Control, 1240 Winkles Road, call (803) 774-3232 or email sumterstrays@gmail.com. As with all of our adoptable pets, a spay or neuter agreement is required, and it is strictly enforced. Proof of spay/neuter after adoption will be required. Visit Sumter Animal Control online at *www.savingsumterstrays.com* or find them on Facebook.

The SPCA relies heavily on community support and donations. Currently, the biggest needs are for dry puppy and kitten food, wet cat food, cat litter and cleaning supplies. The following are also appreciated:
Newspapers, stuffed animals, heavy duty trash bags (30 gallon or larger), dishwashing liquid, laundry detergent, bleach, paper towels, sheets and comforters, baby blankets, canned dog and cat food, dry dog food, treats, leashes and collars, disinfectant spray, all-purpose cleaner, air freshener, no scratch scrubbers, two-sided sponges for dishes, litter freshener and, of course, monetary donations are also gratefully accepted.

SUMTER ANIMAL CONTROL NEEDS YOUR HELP. We are looking for people to walk dogs, foster or help with transport. We desperately need 9 a.m. Monday – Friday walkers. Message us if interested. Must be at least 18 years old. Don't have extra time to be a volunteer? We gladly accept donations of the following: newspapers, puppy pads, canned and dry puppy food, paper towels, Clorox wipes and heavy duty slip leashes. You can also donate from our Amazon Wishlist under Saving Sumter's Strays at *https://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/ wishlist/10Q422KA0MI19*. All donations go toward helping Sumter County dogs. Our all-volunteer organization is making a big difference in the lives of so many homeless pets. Please help us continue to save animals.

the Sumter ITEM SPORTS

E-mail: sports@theitem.com

SECTION B

WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17-19, 2025

Swampcats passing early tests as Laurence Manning opens 7-1

BY TIM LEIBLE
tim@theitem.com



TIM LEIBLE / THE SUMTER ITEM

Laurence Manning's Zy Dennis directs the Swampcat offense against Northside Christian on Friday.

The Laurence Manning basketball team is out to prove that they mean business this season. The Swampcats didn't pack the front end of their schedule with easy games. Instead, they've faced some of SCISA's toughest tests, including matchups with Ben Lippen and Heathwood Hall. So far, the 'Cats have passed nearly every test, their lone blemish coming against SCHSL 5A DI squad Carolina Forest. Head coach Patrick Anderson wanted to see his team rise to the challenge. So far, mission accomplished.

"We want to be tested early and often and see what we need to improve on, what we need to do differently and just kind of build from there," Anderson said. "I think we've answered the challenge early. We were able to get a sweep of that 4A Columbia region, which was huge for us. Being tested early is only going to be beneficial for us as we get later into the season."

The Swampcats had plenty of returning talent from a year ago. Senior point guard Zy Dennis and his sophomore brother Scoop

SEE **LMA,** PAGE 4B



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JIMMY NOONAN

Former Sumter High coach Tom Lewis, standing with plaque, is surrounded by friends, family and former Gamecocks after being inducted into the SCFCA Hall of Fame on Saturday.

Former SHS coach, AD Lewis inducted into SCFCA Hall of Fame

STAFF REPORT

Former Sumter High football coach and athletic director Tom Lewis was inducted into the South Carolina Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame on Saturday, joining five new members into the storied group.

Lewis had an outstanding coaching career at Sumter High, leading the Gamecocks to their first two

SEE **LEWIS,** PAGE 4B

Sumter High welcomes 5 into athletic hall of fame

BY TIM LEIBLE
tim@theitem.com



TIM LEIBLE / THE SUMTER ITEM

The newest class of the Sumter High Athletic Hall of Fame stands with administrators next to their plaque. From left is Sumter High Athletic Director Crasten Davis, Stephon Blanding, Principal Anamaria Sandor, Derrick Witherspoon, Danielle McFadden and Byron Kinney.

Five new members were inducted into the Sumter High Athletic Hall of Fame on Saturday. The special night was packed with nostalgia and a lot of laughter as Stephon Blanding, Byron Kinney, Timmy Jones, Danielle McFadden and Derrick Witherspoon joined the hallowed group.

The night started with two key parts of Sumter High's 1985 basketball state championship. The first was Blanding, who was introduced by his brother, Bernard. The elder Blanding shared fond memories from their time growing up, joking that Stephon's height was the result of nearly falling out of a tree in their backyard.

"Momma said, 'Don't climb that tree today, nobody climb that tree today.' We all listened except Stephon," Bernard Blanding said. "On the way back down, his feet got stuck in that little V. He's hanging upside down, stretched out. That's how his legs started to grow."

The career that followed was spectacular for Blanding. He helped lead Sumter High to that state title in '85, averaging 10.1 points and 8.2 rebounds across his final two seasons with the Gamecocks. He then went to Wofford and ended his career as the school's 10th-leading scorer. He was the fifth player in program history to have more than 1,000 points and 1,000 rebounds, filling up the scoreboard with 1,454 points to go along with 1,149 rebounds. After a booming introduction from his brother, Blanding took the mic to express his gratitude for the moment.

"It's a humbling experience to be up here today. Emotion with tears in our eyes, yes, but to come back here 40-plus years later, standing here, it's a blessing," Blanding said. "Walking through the halls of Sumter High feels a little surreal. I was just a kid with a dream and an even bigger love for basketball and a jump shot that sometimes cooperated. I get to stand on the stage as a hall of fame inductee. I want to say thank you to the staff and those who are part of the committee that chose me to be a part of this; I say thank you.

"The journey along the way and the people that carried me to get to this point; this honor may have my name on it, but trust me, it took a whole village to get me here."

As Blanding recounted some of his favorite moments at Sumter High, his coach was sitting in the front of the room remembering each anecdote. Kinney coached Blanding to the '85 state championship at the end of an undefeated 29-0 season, his first season at the helm. Kinney would lead the Gamecocks for 13 seasons, ending his coaching career with a 274-92 record. He was introduced by Keith West, who helped oversee the hall of fame process. West was known for his exploits on the football field but also suited up for Kinney in basketball and spoke on the intensity the former coach put into every practice and game.

"Everybody thinks Coach Kinney is Mr. Nice Guy. And he is, off the court. On the court, Coach Kinney was tough as nails. He was serious business," West said. "Coach Kinney is a total class act in everything he does. Whether he's teaching, coaching, his professional life, his home life — there's no doubt he's a class act father, husband, you name it. I'm sure his boys, they all played sports, I'm sure they all know that side of Coach Kinney where he's serious business when you get on that court and on that field."

Kinney reflected on the path he took to becoming the head coach at Sumter High. His early days in coaching were spent at Bates Middle School, where he had the chance to work with another Sumter High Athletic Hall of Famer, Coley White. When he moved to Sumter High, he was the JV basketball coach and assisted the football team, where he was able to work with more legendary coaches and players. At the end of his coaching career, family came first. He stepped away from the profession to watch his family grow and was brought to tears as he mentioned his first grandchild in attendance.

"I'm humbled to be here and have my name placed on that wall with so many outstanding athletes and coaches," he said. "Fortunately for me, the good Lord looked after me, and my real education got going when I met and shared an office with Coley White. Coley was a great leader, he was tough, he was a disciplinarian, he had the respect of every teacher, every student, every parent. He taught me how to communicate with players, how to build trust with them. Everything he did was the right way … I totally thank you very much for the patience you had with me in my early years as a coach."

Kinney also said what many people in the room were thinking. His tenure at Sumter High was a part of, arguably, the best athletic success in school history. The football team piled up a pair of state championships in '87 and '90 right after the basketball team took home the top finish. All but one member of the new hall of fame class helped play a part in Sumter High's success in the '80s.

"During that period in the '80s, I would venture to say that was the best 10 years of athletics in Sumter High history," Kinney said. "I'm not saying that because I was a part of it. It's because every sport was solid at the time. Sumter High was in the 4A championship in a lot of different sports, and the reason was there were so many coaches in that period, we had the support of the administration, we cared about each other, we worked together regardless of what sport it was, and we won state titles in football, we won three state titles in basketball in the '80s, our girls basketball team under Donna Bisom's leadership won a state championship, our track teams were great with Sammy Way, Rut Dingle, Steve Robinson, we won multiple region titles. It was a great time to be a coach at Sumter High, and I learned so much from all of those coaches during that period."

Between the two titans of Sumter High basketball was the lone inductee who was not able to attend the ceremony. Jones was back home in Montana after his wife needed surgery but sent a message that was read by Brooks Shumake, who was a part of last year's hall of fame class. Shumake grew up in Hartsville and competed with Jones throughout their time growing up. Jones had a strong career at Sumter High and with the P-15's as a slick fielding shortstop, but his career blossomed at The Citadel, where he hit .351 and still has his name etched in the school's record books. He left as the program leader for at bats (526), hits (185) and total bases (253). He was tied for the career stolen-bases record with 86. His stellar collegiate career led the St. Louis Cardinals to draft Jones in the second round of the 1985 draft. He went on to become the backup to Baseball Hall of Famer Ozzie Smith. Jones finished his MLB career with 113 hits, 28 RBIs, 45 walks and 15 steals. He was a super utility player, taking the field at every position but first base and right field during his professional career.

"You could tell he paid a lot of attention to the finer details of the game, and

SEE **HOF,** PAGE 4B

Wilson Hall, Laurence Manning shine in annual Baron Classic

STAFF REPORT

Wilson Hall hosted its annual Baron Classic on Friday and Saturday, filling the Nash Student Center with a busy weekend of hoops. Locally, Laurence Manning joined in on the fun, as both local programs thrived in the two-day event.

The Lady Barons had two excellent games, crushing Cathedral 49-23 on Friday before a 48-38 win over Northside Christian.

The Wilson Hall defense dominated against Cathedral, holding their opponents to just two free throws in the first quarter and seven points in the opening half. Lilly Grace Przybyla led the offense with 16 points, adding five rebounds, three steals and a block. Grace McArthur added seven points, eight rebounds, four blocks and two steals. In total, nine Lady Barons scored in the win.

Their second game with Northside Christian was a little bit more tense, as the Lady Barons fell in an early 14-3 hole, but they charged back to take an 18-17 lead into the half and took home a 10-point win. McArthur was huge, scoring 18 points to go with 11 rebounds and seven blocks. Ella Sill added eight points, seven rebounds, two assists and a block. Ellis Coker chipped in with seven points, while Bailey Fleming and Mary Foley each added six.



PHOTOS BY TIM LEIBLE / THE SUMTER ITEM

Wilson Hall's Ford Wilder dunks against Cathedral Academy during the Baron Classic on Friday.

The Wilson Hall boys had the same matchups as the girls, beating Cathedral 58-49 before a 69-46 victory over Northside Christian.

Ford Wilder powered the Barons to both victories. He finished with 23 points against Cathedral, while Johnny Lauzon had a big second half to finish with 16. Eric Brown hit a trio of threes on his way to 12 points. Caulder Williamson chipped in with eight, while Nolan Gooch had seven. After a tense first half, the Barons used a big third quarter to break away for the win.

Wilson Hall followed the victory with a comfortable win over Northside Christian. Wilder poured in 27 points, while Brown and Lauzon each added 10. Gooch chipped in with eight.

The Laurence Manning girls split their games, defeating Northside Christian 47-37 on Friday before falling to Heathwood Hall 56-41.

The matchup with Northside was back and forth all night, but LMA finally started to break away in the fourth quarter behind some stellar defense. Lyza Prickelmyer and Ashley Rae Hodge scored all but two of Laurence Manning's fourth-quarter points as they took home the win. Prickelmyer finished the night with 25, while Hodge had 12. Olivia Welch chipped in with six.

Prickelmyer did everything she could to lift LMA to victory, finishing with 21 points, but the Lady Swampcats couldn't dig out of a hole after being outscored 21-8 in the second quarter. Hodge added 16 points, while Sarah Margaret Ferriell added eight.



Wilson Hall's Lilly Grace Przybyla (23) shoots on Friday against Cathedral Academy.



Wilson Hall's Johnny Lauzon (11) passes on Friday.



Laurence Manning's Scoop Dennis (1) drives against Northside Christian.

The Laurence Manning boys had two very different wins during the weekend, crushing Northside Christian 67-40 before outlasting Heathwood Hall 55-54.

Everyone got in on the fun in the blowout of Northside. Wes Lyles and Scoop Dennis each finished with 18 points to lead the team, while Ben Sanders added eight. In total, 10 'Cats scored in the win.

The Swampcats then handed Heathwood Hall their first loss to a SCISA program this fall, grinding out a 55-44 win. Scoop Dennis and Lyles did the bulk of the scoring, finishing with 20 and 15, respectively. Charlie Duvall and Ben Sanders each added eight as LMA improved to 7-1 on the season.



Laurence Manning's Lyza Prickelmyer lines up a free throw on Friday.



the Sumter ITEM SCOREBOARD

BASKETBALL

LAKEWOOD		@	SUMTER HIGH	
BOYS	51-83		GIRLS	35-46
SCOTT'S BRANCH		@	MANNING	
BOYS	64-70		GIRLS	49-66
WILSON HALL		@	CATHEDRAL	
BOYS	58-49		GIRLS	49-23
LMA SWAMPCATS		@	NORTHSIDE CHR.	
BOYS	67-40		GIRLS	47-37
RAGIN PREP		@	CURTIS BAPTIST	
BOYS	66-23			
RIVERWALK		@	LEE CENTRAL	
BOYS	16-66			
EAST CLARENDON		@	LAKE CITY	
BOYS	69-45		GIRLS	38-53
RAGIN PREP		@	LAKEWOOD	
BOYS	57-66			
DORCHESTER		@	LEE ACADEMY	
BOYS	60-50		GIRLS	49-35
SUMTER HIGH		@	CAROLINA FOREST	
BOYS	72-62		GIRLS	30-45



AREA ROUNDUP



PHOTOS BY MICAH GREEN / THE SUMTER ITEM

Manning's Aysia Moore (23) watches her shot against Scott's Branch on Friday.

Manning takes down Eagles in county duel

STAFF REPORT

Manning played host to Scott's Branch on Friday for the final matchup between the Clarendon County rivals this season. The Monarchs brought out the brooms, winning the girls game 66-49 before the boys won 70-64.

The Lady Monarchs won on the back of two dominant performances. Ameerah Conyers and Aysia Moore each scored 23 points as Manning grabbed an early lead they would not relinquish. Trayiona Maxfield led Scott's Branch with 18, while Ziaier Bryant had 10.

The Manning boys used a 23-point second quarter to take a 39-34 lead into the half before grinding out the win in the final two quarters. Lovell Stevenson led the team with 20 points, while his brother Lovon added 19. CJ Robinson chipped in with 15. Frajon Bennett and Nyren Bowman each had 17 for Scott's Branch, while Kazon Taylor added 11.

The Monarchs were back on the court on Saturday, traveling to Myrtle Beach. The girls fell 66-41, while the boys won 65-46.

The Lady Monarchs found themselves in a 16-5 hole at the end of the first quarter and couldn't dig out. Moore finished with 14 points, while Conyers had 10.

The boys had a balanced lineup in their 19-point victory. Lovon Stevenson led the way with 15, while Lovell had 11. Jordan Thompson scored 12, Daniel Robinson chipped in with 10, and Jordan Heyward had nine.

SHS SWEEPS LAKEWOOD BEFORE FACING CAROLINA FOREST

The Sumter High basketball teams hosted Lakewood on Friday before facing off with Carolina Forest on Monday.

The Lady Gamecocks won a defensive battle 46-35. Amaria Anderson paced all scorers with 18 points, while Aniyah Myers added nine and Anari Tindal scored seven. Makayla Cisse led Lakewood with 11, while Lauryn Nesmith added 10.

The No. 5 SHS boys then rolled 83-51. BJ Brown led all scorers with 24, while Carmello Burch had 12, Nick White chipped in 10 and both Josh Pendergrass and Jacori Wright finished with eight. Jy'Ziah Williams led Lakewood with 14, while Damion Wilson and Keondre Henry each added 10.

Sumter High then split with Carolina Forest. Playing at home, the Lady Gamecocks fell 45-30 as they couldn't climb out of a 23-8 hole at halftime. Camilla Gregg led the team with nine points.

The Gamecocks went on the road and won 72-62. Brown had another spectacular performance, finishing with 25 points, while Eli Britt chipped in with 13, White had 10 and both Burch and Wright added eight.

RAGIN PREP TOPS CURTIS BAPTIST, FALLS TO LAKEWOOD

Ragin Prep had a back-to-back on the road, starting with a trip to Curtis Baptist on Friday before playing at Lakewood on Saturday. The Rams split the matchups.

The Rams cruised past Curtis Baptist 66-23. Kavontay Rose had 21 points, while Kden Shannon added 12.

Lakewood then held off the Rams for a 66-57 win. The Gators had a balanced offensive night. Jaylen Bell led the way with 19, while Auri Taylor had 14, Jy'Ziah Williams had 13 and both Jordan Butler and Kaden Brown chipped in with seven. Rose led Ragin Prep with 19 points, while Zymir Robinson-Hill had 17 and Shannon scored 13.

EC SPLITS WITH LAKE CITY

The East Clarendon basketball teams traveled to Lake City on Friday to open region play, splitting the matchups.

The girls couldn't find their offense in a 53-38 loss to open the night. The Wolverines, ranked No. 9 in SCHSL 2A, then ran away with a 69-45 victory in the nightcap. James Gamble and Braylon Hunt each scored 12 in the win. Gamble added nine rebounds and three assists, while Hunt had two dimes and three steals. Rashad Scott chipped in with 11 points, six rebounds and two steals, while Ke'Shaun Porter had 10 points, five rebounds and two steals.

STALLIONS RIDE PAST RIVERWALK

The Lee Central boys basketball team hosted Riverwalk on Friday, cruising to a 66-16 win.

Sinatra Rembert led the team with 17 points, four steals and four assists, while Tyshawn Henry added nine points, five assists and two steals. Javon Jenkins scored eight points with 11 rebounds.

LEE ACADEMY FALLS TO DORCHESTER

The Lee Academy basketball teams hosted Dorchester Academy on Monday, losing both games.

The Lady Cavaliers fell 49-35. Beth Whiteside led the team with 14 points, six rebounds, three steals and two blocks. Karagan Melton added 12 points and two assists. Mazie Tomlinson chipped in with seven points, 12 rebounds, three assists and three steals.

The boys followed with a 60-50 loss. After jumping out to a 19-9 lead in the first, the Cavs stalled out in the second and third quarters as Dorchester charged ahead for the win. Paxton Greene led Lee Academy with 15, while Cannon Hopkins and Cain June each had nine.

ADMS SWEEPS FURMAN

The Alice Drive Middle School basketball teams hosted Furman on Monday, sweeping the night.

The Lady Hawks rolled 67-7 on the back of 23 steals. Cytirah Jackson led the team with 20 points, while LaVayah Dingle had 15 and Maziah Tindal added 11.

The boys followed with a 55-13 win. Jordin Gamble and Keelan Gregg each had 11 points in the win, while Rylan Diehl added seven and Kash Hastie chipped in with five.

BATES SWEEPS HILLCREST

The Bates Middle School basketball teams swept Hillcrest on Monday.

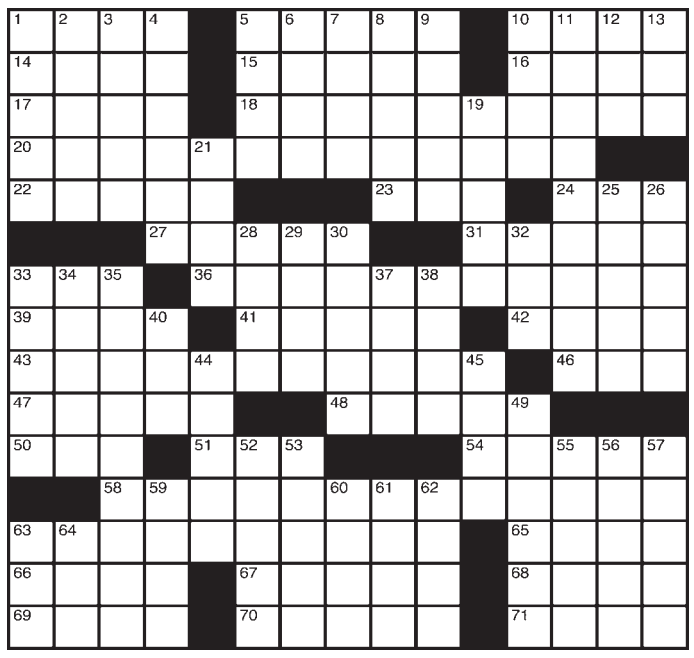
The Lady Bantams opened with a 38-9 win. Ly'Naisha Bradley led all scorers with 12 points while Ka'Mora Davis and Saniah Nelson each added eight points.

The boys followed with a 47-23 win. Kendal Myers led the team with 18 points, while DaRhun Lundy added 10.



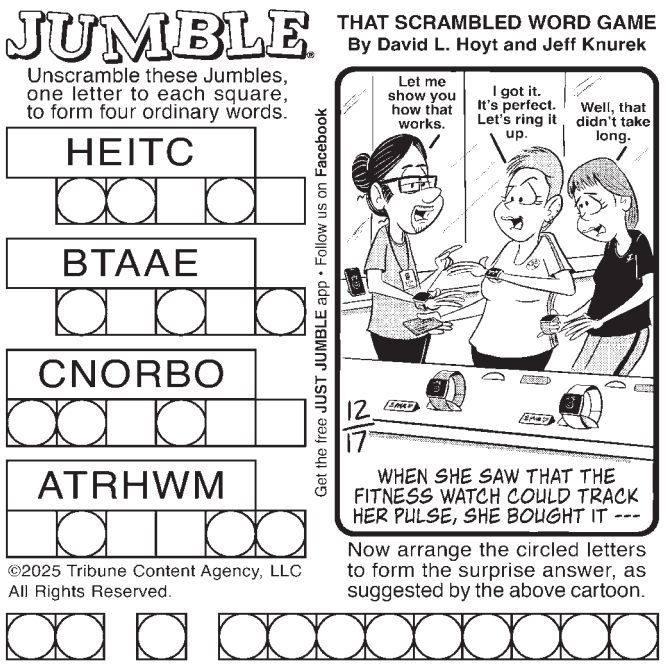
Manning's Daniel Robinson drives against Scott's Branch on Friday.

CROSSWORD



Across
1 Biblical kingdom east of the Dead Sea
5 "But there is __ in Mudville ... "
10 Pack and send
14 Poet __ St. Vincent Millay
15 Abruptly end an engagement?
16 Nevada city on the Truckee River
17 Pros and __
18 Relentlessly protect the line on the battlefield
20 Artist with success in more than one genre
22 To this point
23 Snacked
24 Scratch, say
27 Fortuneteller's deck
31 Home for Sharks or Kraken
33 Frito-__ snacks
36 What an angsty teenager may slam
39 Skin care brand
41 Decorate
42 BMW competitor
43 Be useless
46 Sum of the first three prime numbers
47 __ legend
48 Choose
50 Big D sch.
51 Org. that may confiscate liquids
54 Torah teacher
58 Impressive basketball feats, and what 20-, 36-, and 43-Across have
63 Find an extra level, à la Spinal Tap
65 Help (out)
66 Innovator's first step
67 Like a baseball bat's symmetry
68 Squeeze (past)
69 Square figure
70 Running total
71 Juicy bit of info

Down
1 Hajj destination
2 Smells
3 Pester
4 Type of dog serenaded by Elvis on "The Steve Allen Show"
5 Fictional clownfish
6 Royal name of Norway
7 Card material
8 Jake Heggie's "Dead Man Walking," for one
9 Beer foam producer
10 Mex. miss
11 "I can explain"
12 Travel stop
13 Orca family group
19 Boiling water output
21 Guess
25 Cathode's counterpart
26 __ to go
28 Gather, as crops
29 Against all __
30 Familiar theme
32 Nutrition fig.
33 Seated meditation pose
34 False follower?
35 Calorific tea ingredient in Tibet
37 Like much medication
38 __ in a lifetime
40 Vote to pass a bill
44 Loosen, as a shoelace
45 Hosiery shade
49 Like busy browser windows
52 Water balloon sound
53 Amazon assistant with regional accents
55 Mandoline piece
56 Hosiery shade
57 Castaway's place
59 Fork locale
60 Villainous
61 Bargain
62 Hulu's "__ Murders in the Building"
63 Gimlet liquor
64 Lines from an admirer



SUDOKU

	1	2		5			9	
4	6		1		9		8	
				4	2			
8				7		5		
5	3	1		6		9	4	7
		6		9				3
			9	8				
	8		4		7		6	9
	2			1		4	5	

HOW TO PLAY: Each row, column and set of 3-by-3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 through 9 without repetition.

SOLUTIONS

M	O	A	B		N	O	J	O	Y		S	H	I	P
E	D	N	A		E	L	O	P	E		R	E	N	O
C	O	N	S		M	A	K	E	A	S	T	A	N	D
C	R	O	S	S	O	V	E	R	S	T	A	R		
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7	4	9	8	6	2	1	3	5
6	2	5	1	7	3	4	9	8
1	3	6	2	4	7	8	5	9
5	8	2	9	3	1	7	6	4
4	9	7	6	5	8	2	1	3

Jumbles: ETHIC ABATE BRONCO WARMTH
Answer: When she saw that the fitness watch could track her pulse, she bought it — IN A HEARTBEAT



PHOTOS BY TIM LEIBLE / THE SUMTER ITEM

Danielle McFadden speaks during her induction on Saturday.



Stephon Blanding speaks at the Sumter High Athletic Hall of Fame ceremony on Saturday.



Derrick Witherspoon speaks during his induction into the Sumter High Athletic Hall of Fame.



Byron Kinney speaks during his induction to the Sumter High Athletic Hall of Fame on Saturday.

HOF FROM PAGE B1

it showed on the field," Shumake said. "We were talking about that today. He was like, 'I was a confident kid. I wasn't a big kid, but I was a confident kid, and I just went for what I needed and wanted, and that was to be a baseball player.' And he got pretty good at it."

While Jones wasn't able to attend, he sent his thanks through Shumake.

"To the Sumter High School Hall of Fame committee, thank you for voting me in and selecting me for this honor. I'd also like to thank Keith West for the nomination. Without him, this recognition simply would not have happened, and I am sincerely grateful," Jones said through Shumake. "This truly means a great deal to me."

McFadden became part of the first mother-daughter combination to be enshrined in the Sumter High Athletic Hall of Fame. She was beyond thrilled to join her mother, Karen Grant-McFadden, in the hall.

"It truly means a lot to stand here tonight and receive this honor. When I first walked the halls of this school, I never imagined a moment like this. Back then, I was just a kid trying to find my place, my confidence and some direction," McFadden said. "I stand here tonight knowing that this moment is so much bigger than me. My mom, the Karen Grant-McFadden, was inducted into this same hall of fame for her accomplishments in track and field in 2011. As a sophomore watching her receive that honor, I thought she was the coolest person in the world, a walking legend. My mom was fast. That's all I heard people talking about growing up. All I ever wanted was to be faster than her, but to let her tell it, I never beat her. I respectfully disagree, but I also learned to choose my battles wisely.

"Mom, you set the standard, and now for us to become the first mother-daughter duo in school history to receive this honor, it means everything. Thank you for showing me what greatness looks like, not just in sports, but in life. Dad, you worked so hard so that I could travel and compete and chase the game that I loved. I grew up watching two people who embodied hard work, faith and dedication, and I carry that with me every single day."

The younger McFadden had a sensational career at Sumter High. She was a state champion in the long jump as a sophomore and earned all-state honors there. She was also named to the National Elite track and field championship team alongside scoring 1,000 career points in high school before a collegiate career at both University of Arkansas-Fort Smith and Vorhees. She was introduced by Lisa Shumake, who coached McFadden in basketball.

"When you think of this inductee, you should immediately think, 'Champion,'" Lisa Shumake said. "All Danielle McFadden did at Sumter High School was win. A career in track and field that featured 20-plus individual championships, Danielle has been raising eyebrows and turning heads at every invitational the Gamecocks attended. As her teammates used to say, Danielle was going to show up and show out."

The final inductee was Witherspoon, who made history when he jumped over the pile as a sophomore to score the game-winning touchdown of the 1987 state championship against Spartanburg. He was introduced by Dexter Davis, who shared stories of recruiting him to Clemson, where Witherspoon rushed 939 yards and had seven total touchdowns after an illustrious high school career. Witherspoon then followed Davis to the NFL, returning kicks for the Philadelphia Eagles. The two Gamecocks went on to found the South Carolina Chapter of NFL Alumni, with Davis serving as president and Witherspoon as VP. Throughout both of their speeches, there was one repeated message: conquering adversity through faith.

"He never gave up," Davis said. "His first year coming out of Clemson, he didn't get into the league. His second year, he didn't get into the league. But that third year, (he made it) because he was persevering and he worked hard," Davis said. "Most folks would've stopped, they would've given up their dreams and aspirations, but he led by example. Still to this day, I share with him that you need to tell that story because he's an example of not giving up and letting God max you out in his time."

Witherspoon echoed that message of perseverance.

"I thank God first and foremost. Without Him, none of this would've been possible," Witherspoon said. "The game of football taught me great skills, skills that helped me overcome adversity. But I'm not the only one that went through adversity. I know a lot of players who went through adversity who can't handle it. To me, adversity was a learning tool. I learned from every mistake that others made, plus the mistakes I made. That's what helped me keep going, adversity. While going through adversity, I developed a personal relationship with God."



Laurence Manning's Wes Lyles (10) shoots against Northside Christian on Friday.



PHOTOS BY TIM LEIBLE / THE SUMTER ITEM

Laurence Manning's Ben Sanders, left, drives to the basket on Friday.

LMA FROM PAGE B1

Dennis are a dynamic duo of playmaker and scorer, while Ben Sanders returns in the paint and senior Charlie Duvall is manning the three-point line as a sharpshooter. The big addition this season has been Wes Lyles, who transferred over from Sumter High. He made an easy transition to slot into an already talented squad, helping the Swampcats take their game to the next level with another scoring threat.

"Even if you have guys coming up from JV or have guys come in, it's always interesting to see how it shakes out when they get into the mix. We have very good chemistry on our team, and Wes fits in very well," Anderson said. "They're very close on and off the court, and you can see it play out on the court, as well. It's been a very natural addition."

Laurence Manning has a talented offensive squad. Scoop Dennis and Lyles can both regularly pour in 20-plus points, while Duvall's shooting has been critical at times to spark the offense. While the 'Cats can put some points on the board, Anderson sees the other side of the ball as their greatest strength.

"We don't even talk about offense a whole lot because we know we have so many guys on our team that can really have a big night at any given moment. Even coming off the bench, I feel like we've got guys who can help us in a lot of different ways offensively. I think our greatest strength, really, is our defense," Anderson said. "That's really our identity, and our guys know that and they accept that, and they understand that it gives us the best chance to be successful this year. They've really bought into our mentality defensively, and that really helps our offense go."

That defense has carried Laurence Manning to a few narrow victories this year. They outlasted Hammond 43-41 in their first game of December before grinding out a 60-59 win over Ben Lippen, handing the Falcons their first loss to a SCISA program this season. Their most recent victory was a 55-54 win over Heathwood Hall in the Baron Classic. Heathwood Hall may have a 5-5 record, but before Saturday, their only losses came against two SCHSL squads, Westwood and Dreher, and two Georgia squads, Brookwood and Morgan County. Then came the Swampcats, who started the game with an excellent defensive performance before holding off a second-half comeback by the Highlanders.

"We just know we're going to make some people uncomfortable defensively and take away some things they like to do well," Anderson said. "We know we've had a bunch of one-point games recently, and I feel like we've got a lot of guys who have been in that situation many times now, so we never feel anxious or nervous in those situations because of the experience they have. They know how to finish games, and it's something we practice pretty routinely, those late-game situations, and we've gotten it done so far."

While he doesn't always put up gaudy point totals, Zy Dennis is the straw that stirs the drink for Laurence Manning. He's running the show from the point guard position, directing the offense. He's going to bring intensity on both sides of the ball and fire up his teammates when the moment calls for it.

"Zy being a senior point guard, that is what his role is this year, and he's accepted that 100 percent. He's quietly had one of the better years of anyone on the team. He just hasn't lit it up in the scorebook," Anderson said. "As far as getting us in the right play and the right setup, distributing to those guys and then defensively he gets after people. He's really accepted that role, and that's the point guard you want. He doesn't care about the points he gets; he just wants to win, and that's what we all want to do."

Scoop Dennis keeps stepping his game up, too. He was already a dynamic scorer with the ability to shoot it a bit from the outside and make defenders pay when he takes the ball to the hoop. Anderson has seen the sophomore find small ways to make life difficult for opposing defenses.

"The biggest thing with him is that he's very mature," Anderson said. "He just comes to work, and he's never going to get too high or too low; he's just been very, very consistent. We're going to need that from him if we're going to be as successful as we want to be this season."

Laurence Manning's top two scoring threats, Lyles and Scoop Dennis, both thrive by getting to the basket. With another strong post player down low in Sanders, the lane can get pretty crowded. That's where Duvall steps in. His outside shooting stretches defenses, and he can light up the scoreboard, too. Duvall was the key to their narrow win over Ben Lippen, going 5-6 from behind the arc while scoring 22 points in the win.

"Charlie has been huge," Anderson said. "You can't throw bodies in the paint to keep our guys from getting to the rim, you're going to have to worry about him. We've got a number of guys, on any given night, who can light it up from the outside, as well. You've got Whitley Boykin on the bench, Walker Cribb, a number of guys who can go in and really put pressure on people, but Charlie has had some big games when we needed him."

Laurence Manning only has a few games left before the calendar flips to 2026. They host Northside Christian on Thursday before playing in the District 9 Tournament at Manning High after Christmas. After that, they've got a tough region to compete with in January and February. While they gear up for the stretch run, Anderson is preaching consistency and toughness.

"We talk about being consistent and embracing our identity," Anderson said. "Our identity is that we want to be the toughest team in SCISA; we want to be the best defense in SCISA. We talk about being consistent in those things. If we can do that and play with an energy and effort to the standard we talk about here, we think we can have a successful season."

LEWIS FROM PAGE B1

state championships on the gridiron in 1987 and 1990. Sumter High played for four other state championships under Lewis' leadership. He finished his Gamecock coaching career with a 156-62 record across 16 seasons.

SCFCA welcomed six new members to its hall of fame on Saturday. Lon Armstrong was posthumously inducted alongside Lewis, Tommy Davis, Chuck Reedy, James Moorer and Stuart Holcombe. Lewis was joined by a cavalcade of former players and coaches for the occasion.

"Getting this honor from the South Carolina Football Coaches Association was the highlight of my coaching career," Lewis said. "Being surrounded by many of my former players, coaches, friends and family meant everything to me."



Infielder Kim returns to Braves on 1-year deal



Atlanta Braves shortstop Ha-Seong Kim signed a one-year deal to return to the team on Monday.

AP FILE PHOTO

BY CHARLES ODUM
Associated Press

ATLANTA — Shortstop Ha-Seong Kim is returning to the Atlanta Braves, agreeing Monday to a $20 million, one-year contract that addressed a major offseason priority for the team.

Kim gets a $4 million raise. He had declined a $16 million player option from the $29 million, two-year contract he agreed to in February with Tampa Bay, a deal that paid him $13 million. The Braves announced the new deal with Kim Monday night.

General manager Alex Anthopoulos said a long-term contract with Kim was discussed before the agreement on a one-year deal. Anthpoulos said he still hoped Kim's return means "hopefully a longer marriage here."

The 30-year-old from South Korea batted .234 with five homers and 17 RBIs for the Rays and Braves, who claimed him off waivers on Sept. 1. Kim didn't make his season debut until July 4 because of right shoulder surgery in late 2024.

"This contract reflects our belief in him and he's a much better player," Anthopoulos said of Kim's 2025 statistics.

Kim has a .242 average with 52 homers and 217 RBIs for San Diego (2021-24), Tampa Bay (2025) and Atlanta.

Anthopoulos said he's looking for Kim to return to his production levels he enjoyed with the Padres.

"We think we've got a very good chance to get the guy he was with San Diego," Anthopoulos said, adding it will benefit both the Braves and Kim if he has a big 2026 season and improves his status for a bigger contract with more years after next season.

"Come here, be the player you can be, have a great year and get the contract you deserve," Anthopoulos said.

Atlanta designated right-hander Osvaldo Bido for assignment to open a roster spot.

The return of Kim means Mauricio Dubón, acquired from the Houston Astros for Nick Allen in an exchange of infielders on Nov. 19, likely will be available in a utility role instead of being relied on to be the starter at shortstop.

Dubón, 31, appeared in 133 games with Houston last season and batted .241 while earning his second Gold Glove, each time as a utility infielder. He also won a Gold Glove in 2023.

The return of Kim comes after outfielder Mike Yastrzemski and the Braves agreed to a $23 million, two-year contract on Wednesday that includes a 2028 club option with the potential to make the deal worth $26 million over three seasons.

It has been a busy week for the Braves, who also added two-time All-Star reliever Robert Suarez on Thursday to a $45 million, three-year contract.

Panthers struggling to handle success, lose control of destiny in NFC South playoff race

BY STEVE REED
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE — The Carolina Panthers are still learning how to handle success.

While the Panthers have thrived in the underdog role this season with wins over Green Bay and the Los Angeles Rams, they continue to struggle winning the games they're supposed to win.

Sunday was the latest example.

The Panthers, needing a win over the last-place New Orleans Saints at the Superdome to take full control of the NFC South, instead surrendered a fourth-quarter lead and lost 20-17, leaving them on the outside looking in at the playoff picture with a 7-7 record. They're tied with Tampa Bay with two head-to-head games remaining against the Buccaneers, who are in the driver's seat in terms of tiebreakers.

Carolina has now lost 12 straight games when listed as the betting favorite, according to BetMGM Sportsbook. The Panthers have not won a game they're favored to win since Week 3 of the 2021 season.

Second-year head coach Dave Canales attributed some of that to a young team still learning how to win.

"I see the inconsistency of play that we can have at times, and to me this is a group that is still growing in terms of just finding week in, week out success that way," Canales said Monday. "And that's what I really attribute it to. That's what it looks like on film."

Canales pointed out that when a team begins to win big games, it tends to catch an opponent's attention, and the attention to details needs to be amped up.

"I know that when you go into a game as a favorite or you start to build some momentum, the other team also sees that and they're aware like, 'hey, let's go,' and that calls on them to give their best," Canales said.

WHAT'S WORKING

Carolina has converted more fourth-down conversions (23) than any team in the league and its 70% conversion rate is fifth best in the league.

However, the Panthers failed on the biggest fourth-down conversion attempt of the season on Sunday when the Saints blew up a fourth-and-1 run up the middle by Chuba Hubbard while Carolina was leading 17-10 early in the fourth quarter. If Carolina had converted the fourth down — or kicked the 53-yard-old field goal — that would have made it a two-score game.

Instead, the Panthers never scored again and lost.

The Panthers aren't a team that runs the tush push, largely because of the diminutive nature of quarterback Bryce Young, who is listed at 5-foot-10 and a generous 204 pounds on the team's website.

"It's physics," Canales said. "He goes about 190 pounds, and when you have a 220-, 230-pound quarterback leaning on a center, that's an advantage."

Chiefs quarterback Mahomes undergoes ACL surgery in Dallas, begins long road to recovery

BY DAVE SKRETTA
Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes underwent surgery in Dallas on Monday night to repair the ACL he tore in his left knee in a loss to the Chargers, and the team said in statement that he would begin the long rehabilitation process immediately.

The procedure was performed by Dr. Dan Cooper, a highly regarded orthopedist and the team physician of the Dallas Cowboys.

Mahomes tore the ligament when he was spun to the ground while trying to keep Kansas City's postseason hopes alive late in the 16-13 loss on Sunday. The team announced the severity of the injury in a statement later that night.

"I've had a good visit with him, a couple of different times. He's in a good place," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said earlier Monday. "You know, he always feels like he let people down, but he comes back and he's ready for the challenge ahead."

There are a number of factors that go into how long the recovery time will be, including the severity of the tear. Most players are able to return to the field in six to 12 months, which means Mahomes should be back at some point next season.

Gardner Minshew will quarterback the Chiefs through the final three games of this season.

The Chiefs were eliminated from playoff contention for the first time in a decade Sunday with the loss to the Chargers, coupled with three other results that didn't go their way. They had reached the past seven AFC championship games with Mahomes as the starter, winning three Super Bowls and losing two others along the way, including one to Philadelphia this past February.

"He'll attack it, just like he does everything else," Reid said of the rehab. "There have been some pretty good quarterbacks that have had the same injury and done pretty well after they came back. He'll get after it, and he's got good people here to rehab him."

That includes two of his current AFC rivals.

Bengals quarterback Joe Burrow tore both the ACL and MCL in his left knee in November 2020, and he recovered in time to play the next season, when he was voted the NFL's Comeback Player of the Year. Colts quarterback Daniel Jones tore his right ACL in November 2023 when he was with the Giants, and he came back to start Week 1 the following season.



Los Angeles Chargers defensive tackle Justin Eboigbe (92) checks on Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes (15) as Chiefs head coach Andy Reid, center, looks on after Mahomes was injured on Dec. 14.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

From grandpa to gridiron: Rivers' inspiring NFL return

BY ARNIE STAPLETON
Associated Press

The " Gridiron Grandpa " thrilled both young and old alike with his return to the NFL 1,800 days after last throwing a touchdown pass.

Philip Rivers nearly helped the injury-riddled Colts (8-6) pull off the upset at Seattle, completing 18 of 27 passes for 120 yards and a touchdown with one sack and an interception in an 18-16 loss to the 11-win Seahawks.

"I was just thankful — grateful — that I was out there," said Rivers, whose pick came on his final pass as he tried to force the ball down the field in the closing seconds. "And it was a blast — it was a blast — but obviously the emotions now are disappointment. This isn't about me. We have a team scrapping like crazy to try and stay alive and get into the postseason."

For much of the NFL, it was all about Rivers, who admitted he wasn't even sure how he'd play coming out of retirement as a Pro Football Hall of Fame semifinalist.

"There is doubt, and it's real," Rivers said. "The guaranteed safe bet is to go home or to not go for it, and the other one is, 'Shoot, let's see what happens.' I hope in that sense that can be a positive to some young boys, or young people."

The high school team that Rivers coaches in his native Alabama, the St. Michael Catholic Cardinals, who finished 13-1 this season, gathered at a local restaurant in Fairhope for a watch party and went wild when Rivers threw a touchdown pass to Josh Downs that put Indianapolis ahead 13-3.

And you can bet plenty of gray-haired football fans were just as thrilled as those teenagers to see "Old Man Rivers" slinging it again and joining other sports greats who returned from retirement with less hair or more gray, including the likes of Michael Jordan, George Foreman, Mario Lemieux and Magic Johnson.

Rivers definitely has a dad bod, and last week he couldn't even tell reporters what his weight was, only that it was certainly higher than when he walked away after the 2020 season.

For nearly five years, Rivers' seemingly final touchdown toss was caught by tight end Jack Doyle in Indy's 27-24 loss to the Buffalo Bills in an AFC wild-card game on Jan. 9, 2021.

The one he threw to Downs on Sunday was Rivers' 438th career touchdown toss, counting the playoffs, and few could have been more thrilling.

Rivers was the butt of plenty of old-man jokes and the subject of innumerable social media memes after the Colts called him out of retirement to try to salvage a once-promising season that's been sabotaged by injuries, including the one to starting quarterback Daniel Jones, whose stirring comeback season ended with a torn Achilles.

Rivers did nothing to embarrass himself Sunday, not even when he slipped down without contact on one drop-back before scrambling to his feet and darting up the middle.

Rivers insisted he enjoyed the few hard hits he took from the Seahawks' stout defense, saying, "I never minded that part of it. My wife always tells me I'm crazy because there's been times in the last three or four years I said, 'I wish I could just throw one and get hit — hard.'"

Tim Hasselbeck, the 47-year-old ex-NFL QB turned ESPN analyst who recently became head football coach at The Ensworth High School in Nashville, was thoroughly impressed by the way Rivers handled himself after just one short week of practice with the Colts.

"That's something that people need to understand, too," Hasselbeck said on the "Scott Van Pelt Show," stressing that Rivers risked not just his health but his reputation by returning to the gridiron.

"He's been out of the game for nearly five years. The risk associated with (returning to the NFL): getting hurt, tearing your knee up, blowing out an Achilles — and then more honestly — humiliating yourself by playing," Hasselbeck said. "There were risks associated with what he's doing."

"I work with colleagues that were just flat wrong," Van Pelt concurred, "that acted like it was embarrassing that this guy was going to go do this. No, it wasn't. They lost by two points to one of the best teams in football."



Grizzlies top Clippers in Morant's 2nd game back

BY DOUG PADILLA
Associated Press

INGLEWOOD, Calif. — Jaren Jackson Jr. scored 21 of his 31 points in the first half and Cam Spencer added a career-high 27 points as the Memphis Grizzlies beat the Los Angeles Clippers 121-103 on Monday night.

Jaylen Wells scored 16 points and rookie Cedric Coward had 12 as the Grizzlies earned a victory over the Clippers for the third time in less than three weeks. Former Crestwood star Ja Morant also scored 12 points for Memphis in his second game since returning from a calf injury.

While Morant has returned, Grizzlies center Zach Edey missed his second game of an extended absence because of a left ankle injury. Santi Aldama started at center for the second consecutive game and was held to just three points with two rebounds.

Kawhi Leonard scored 21 points and Kris Dunn added 17 for the Clippers, who have lost 12 of their last 14 games.

James Harden was held to 13 points, while John Collins and Jordan Miller each had 10 for Los Angeles in its eighth straight home loss. The Clippers last won in their own building on Oct. 31.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Former Crestwood standout and current Memphis Grizzlies guard Ja Morant (12) goes to the basket against the Los Angeles Clippers on Monday, Dec. 15, in Inglewood, California.

The Clippers led 64-63 on Leonard's 3-pointer just before the midpoint of the third quarter. The Grizzlies took charge from there, going on a 9-0 run for a 72-64 lead, while taking a 90-76 advantage into the fourth quarter. Wells had four points in the run.

Spencer made four 3-pointers in less than six minutes of the fourth quarter and made a career high seven shots from long range on 10 attempts.

Jackson scored 20 points for the first time in six games, after he averaged 10.2 points over the previous five contests while shooting 42.6%. He was 13 of 18 (72.2%) from the floor.

Former South Carolina standout quarterback Taneyhill dies at 52

BY STEVE REED
Associated Press

Steve Taneyhill, a record-setting quarterback for the South Carolina Gamecocks best known for his distinct long-flowing mullet and his homerun swing after touchdown passes, has died. He was 52.

The South Carolina athletic department confirmed Monday through a close friend of Taneyhill's that he died overnight in his sleep. No cause of death was provided.

Taneyhill led South Carolina to its first bowl victory in program history as a junior in 1994, defeating West Virginia in the Carquest Bowl.

Taneyhill, from Altoona, Pennsylvania, set school career records with 753 completions and 62 passing touchdowns and was second with 8,782 passing yards and seventh with a 60.5 completion percentage, according to the school. He was inducted into the South Carolina Athletics Hall of Fame in 2006.

In four seasons, Taneyhill had eight 300-yard passing games including six during his senior season. He finished his career with the two highest passing yardage games, and three of the top four games, in school history: 471 yards vs. Mississippi State in 1995, 451 yards vs. East Carolina in 1994 and 405 yards against Georgia in 1995.

Edwards' career-high 29 points lead No. 3 South Carolina to 95-55 win over Penn State

COLUMBIA (AP) — Joyce Edwards had a career-high 29 points and four blocks as No. 3 South Carolina used a strong third quarter to beat Penn State 95-55 on Sunday.

The Gamecocks (10-1) had just eight players and were missing 6-foot-6 starter Madina Okot and reserve freshman Agot Makeer. But behind Edwards scoring inside, South Carolina started 19-3 after the break to take control over the Lady Lions (6-4).

Ta'Niya Latson added 18 points while two other starters, Raven Johnson and Tessa Johnson, scored 15 points apiece.

Edwards, a sophomore, had a basket in the final period to surpass her previous best of 28 against Florida in February.

South Carolina announced a short time before tipoff that leading rebounder and shot blocker Okot and bench player Makeer would miss the game. Okot, who's averaged 14.8 points and 11.1 rebounds, had started the first 10 games before missing this one against the Lady Lions.

Okot leads the country with seven games with double figures in points and rebounds.

OBITUARIES

SUE BELL MCDONALD WEEKS

Sue Bell McDonald Weeks, 90, wife of Lewis Weeks Jr. and daughter of the late Charlie McDonald and Annie Mae Fisher McDonald, was born on July 14, 1935, in Elliott. She departed this life on Friday, Dec. 12, 2025, at her residence.



WEEKS

Public viewing will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 17, 2025, from 2-6 p.m. at Job's Mortuary Inc.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 18, 2025, at Jehovah Missionary Baptist Church, 609 Manning Ave., Sumter, with Pastor Nate Brock presiding and Pastor Marion H. Newton, eulogist. Interment will follow in Florence National Cemetery, Florence.

Job's Mortuary Inc., 312 S. Main St., is in charge of arrangements.

Online memorials may be sent to the family at *jobsmortuaryinc@gmail.com* or visit us on the web at *www.jobsmortuary.net*.

JAMES MARSHAL GEORGIA

James Marshal Georgia, 77, passed away on Friday, Dec. 12, 2025, in Summerton.

Services have been entrusted to Clarendon Funeral Home LLC of Summerton.

ZENNIE DAVIS HARSHMAN

BETHUNE — Zennie Davis Harshman, 76, wife of Gary E. Harshman, passed away Friday, Dec. 12, 2025, at MUSC Health Florence Medical Center.



HARSHMAN

Born May 28, 1949, in Sumter County, she was a daughter of the late Jess Willard Davis and Sadie Lou Davis. She was a member of Providence Baptist Church and retired as a branch manager from the Bank of America.

Survivors include her husband of 55 years; a daughter, Tina Harshman Price (Michael); two sisters, Dale Davis Mixon (Perry) and Pamela D'Angelo; and special nephews, Matthew Geddings and Michael Geddings.

She was preceded in death by a grandson, Cameron Ryan; her twin brother, Dennie Davis; and a brother-in-law, Richard L. Harshman.

A graveside service was held at noon Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2025, in Evergreen Memorial Park Cemetery officiated by the Rev. Wayne McElveen.

The family received friends from 3 to 6 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 14, 2025, at the home of her daughter, 4667 Newman Road, Bethune, and from 5 to 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 15, at Elmore-Cannon-Stephens Funeral Home.

Elmore-Cannon-Stephens Funeral Home and Crematorium of Sumter is in charge of the arrangements.

JENNIE LINN MCLAURIN DUFFIE

Jennie Linn McLaurin Duffie, beloved wife of retired Brig. Gen. John B. Duffie for more than 65 years, died on Saturday, Dec. 13, 2025.



DUFFIE

Born Aug. 2, 1941, in Sumter, she was the daughter of Hugh M. McLaurin Jr. and Louise Nettles McLaurin.

Mrs. Duffie was a graduate of Sumter High School, where she served as senior class secretary and organized class reunions for many years. She attended Limestone College. She was a sustaining member and former secretary of the Sumter Junior Welfare League. In recognition of her service to the Field Artillery, she received the Molly Pitcher Award. She also served as secretary of the Sumter Board of Realtors during her tenure as a real estate agent.

A devoted member of First Presbyterian Church, Mrs. Duffie was active in several adult Sunday School classes and served as a Sunday School and Bible School teacher for children. She was also active in the circles of Presbyterian Women, serving as a secretary and receiving an Honorary Life Membership.

Wedgefield Presbyterian Church was especially dear to her heart. When her children were young, she ensured they participated fully in church activities. Later, she returned as an active member, where she and her husband served as Communion preparers. Their children honored them with the gift of a Communion pottery service to the church.

Survivors include her husband, John B. Duffie; two daughters, Louise Duffie Glover (Ron) and Linn Duffie Richardson; one son, John B. Duffie III (Kelly); four grandchildren, Will Richardson (Rebekah), Jennie Linn Richardson, John Blake Duffie (Zoe) and Taylor Duffie; one great-grandchild, William Shepherd Richardson; and numerous loving cousins, nieces and nephews. She is also survived by devoted caregivers, Mrs. Willie Mae Cokley and Mrs. Nicey Bossard.

She was preceded in death by a grandson, Christian J. Glover, and a son-in-law, Bill Richardson.

Funeral services will be held Thursday, Dec. 18, 2025, at 3 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, with the Rev. Dr. Stewart Rawson and the Rev. Dr. Ron Glover officiating. The family will receive friends prior to the service from 2 to 3 p.m. in McLeod Fellowship Hall.

Burial will follow in Wedgefield Presbyterian Church Cemetery with the Rev. Jodie Foster officiating.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Wedgefield Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 36, Wedgefield, SC 29168, or to First Presbyterian Church, 9 W. Calhoun St., Sumter, SC 29150.

Online condolences may be sent to *www.sumterfunerals.com*.

Elmore Hill McCreight Funeral Home & Crematory, 221 Broad St., Sumter, is in charge of the arrangements, (803) 775-9386.

Elmore Hill McCreight
Funeral Home and Crematory

RUBY LULENE BRAZELL PAUL

Ruby Lulene Brazell Paul, 83, wife of Mack James Paul Sr., died Sunday, Dec. 14, 2025, at her home.

Born Nov. 17, 1942, in Camden, she was a daughter of the late Rivers Clater Brazell and Myrtle Lee Anderson Brazell Baker.

Elmore Hill McCreight Funeral Home & Crematory, 221 Broad St., Sumter, is in charge of the arrangements, (803) 775-9386.

RAYMOND LINDLEY BURKE

MARIETTA, Georgia — Raymond Lindley Burke, 88, born in Burlington, North Carolina, on June 6, 1937, died Saturday, Dec. 13, 2025, in Marietta, Georgia. He was the son of Claude Burke and Flora Nix Burke. The husband of Earlene Rudd Burke, his wife of over 50 years, they were high school sweethearts at Williams HS, Burlington, North Carolina. Earlene died in 2010.



BURKE

Raymond is survived by one daughter, Angela Burke Durrett, and son-in-law, Mark E. Durrett, both of Marietta; grandsons, Samuel G. Durrett (Emily) and Edward "Ned" G. Durrett (Emilee); and five grandchildren, Piper, Hollis, Willow, Vance and Early. He was predeceased by a grandson, Stephen Burke Rice.

The family wishes to acknowledge the faithful love, care and support of Judy Keaton of North Myrtle Beach, Raymond's longtime special friend. Raymond was the baby of 12 children and was predeceased by the other 11.

After employment at Glen Raven Mills and Western Electric, Raymond worked as a member of the Burlington Fire Department, rising to the position of operations chief and retiring in 1988. He enjoyed all sports, playing and watching, and enjoyed the restaurants of North Carolina and South Carolina in his retirement. For the last decade and a half, he resided with his daughter Angie and son-in-law, Mark, who cared for him through his final days. Raymond was easygoing and always cheerful and helpful to others. The family is at home, 569 Stone Field Run NW, Marietta, Georgia, 30060.

ELIZANN WETHERSPOON

Elizann Wetherspoon, 78, daughter of the late Nathaniel Hardy Sr. and Mary Emma Witherspoon, was born on April 30, 1947, in Sumter. She departed this life on Friday, Dec. 12, 2025, at McLeod Health Clarendon, Manning.



WETHERSPOON

Public viewing will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 17, 2025, from 2 to 6 p.m. at Job's Mortuary Inc.

Funeral services will be held at 1 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 18, 2025, at Salem Chapel & Heritage Center, 101 S. Salem Ave., Sumter, with the Rev. Jermaine H. Walker presiding and the Rev. Dr. Sammie D. Simmons, eulogist.

Interment will follow in Smith Cemetery, Sumter.

Family will receive friends at 2300 Lloyd Drive, Sumter, daily from 4 to 7 p.m.

Job's Mortuary Inc., 312 S. Main St., is in charge of arrangements.

Online memorials may be sent to the family at *jobsmortuaryinc@gmail.com*, or visit us on the web at *www.jobsmortuary.net*.

SGT. 1ST CLASS STEVIE RANDY MCCALL

Sgt. 1st Class Stevie Randy McCall, 57, died Friday, Dec. 12, 2025, at Ralph H Johnson VA Medical Center in Charleston. Born May 24, 1968, in Sumter, he was the son of the late Elizabeth Johnson and Jerry McCall.

The family will receive relatives and friends at the home, 3440 Sargent Road, Dalzell.

Funeral arrangements are incomplete and will be announced by the management of Williams Funeral Home Inc., 821 N. Main St., Sumter.

BOONYONG NOKAEW

Boonyong Nokaew, age 52, beloved husband of 25 years to Saengduean Nokaew, passed away on Sunday, Dec. 14, 2025, at Prisma Health Tuomey.

A visitation will be held at Bullock Funeral Home on Thursday, Dec. 18, 2025, from 10 a.m. to noon.

You may go to *www.bullockfuneralhome.com* and sign the family's guest book.

The family has chosen Bullock Funeral Home of Sumter for the arrangements.

Bullock Funeral Home
& Crematorium

WILLIAM ANTHONY STOKES

William Anthony "Tony" Stokes, 83, died Saturday, Dec. 13, 2025, at his home.

Born Oct. 12, 1942, in Lee County, he was a son of the late Arnold Claire Stokes and Johnnie Mae Wyndham Stokes. He was a small business owner and retired from the City of Sumter. He was a U.S. Air Force veteran.

Survivors include a sister-in-law, Loretta Stokes; nephews, Bobby A. "Chip" Stokes Jr. (Lori), James Daniel "Danny" Stokes (Paige) and William H. "Will" Stokes (Shelly); five grand-nieces and -nephews; and five great-grand-nieces and -nephews.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a brother, Bobby A. Stokes.

A graveside service will be held at 3 p.m. Friday, Dec. 19, 2025, in the Sumter Cemetery officiated by the Rev. Mark Barnette.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to the March of Dimes, marchofdimes.com.

Elmore-Cannon-Stephens Funeral Home and Crematorium of Sumter is in charge of the arrangements.

GENEVA DIXON WILSON

Geneva Dixon Wilson, 92, widow of Malachi Wilson, died Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2025, at her home in Bishopville. Born March 22, 1933, in Woodrow, she was the daughter of the late Robert Dixon and Ida Davis Dixon.

The family will receive relatives and friends at the home, 414 Perkins St., Bishopville.

Funeral arrangements are incomplete and will be announced by the management of Williams Funeral Home Inc., 821 N. Main St., Sumter.

the Sumter ITEM CLASSIFIEDS

To Place Your Classified Ads, Please call

803-774-1200

CLASSIFIED DEADLINES

11:00 a.m. Tuesday for the Wednesday edition

11:00 a.m. Friday for the Saturday edition

We will be happy to change your ad if an error is made; however we are not responsible for errors after the first run day. We shall not be liable for any loss or expense that results from the printing or omission of an advertisement. We reserve the right to edit, refuse or cancel any ad at any time.

LEGAL NOTICES

Abandon Vehicle / Boat

Abandoned Boat Notice
To all persons claiming an interest in: **1970-14'-Jonboat-No Hull Id#**N/A; Chadwick Caldwell will apply to SCDNR for title on watercraft/outboard motor. If you have any claim to the watercraft/outboard motor, contact SCDNR at **(803) 734-3699**. Upon thirty days after the date of the last advertisement if no claim of interest is made and the watercraft/outboard motor has not been reported stolen, SCDNR shall issue clear title. **Case No. 20250922950754.**

Summons & Notice

**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF SUMTER
IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
C/A NO.: 2025-CP-43-01682**

**Selene Finance, LP,
Plaintiff,
v.
Suzanne Robinson, or if Suzanne Robinson is deceased, Any heirs-at-law or devisees of Suzanne Robinson, their heirs, Personal Representatives, Administrators, Successors and Assigns, and all other persons or entities entitled to claim through them; all unknown persons or entities with any right, title, estate, interest in or lien upon the real estate described in the complaint herein; also any persons who may be in the military service of the United States of America, being a class designated as Richard Roe; and any unknown minors, incompetent or imprisoned person, or persons under a disability being a class designated as John Doe; United Community Bank,
Defendant(s).**

**TO THE DEFENDANT(S) ABOVE NAMED:
YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and required to appear and defend by answering the Complaint in this action, a copy of which is hereby served upon you, and to serve a copy of your Answer on the subscribers at their offices at 3800 Fernandina Road, Suite 110, Columbia, SC 29210, within thirty (30) days after the service hereof, exclusive of the day of such service; except that the United States of America, if named, shall have sixty (60) days to answer after the service hereof, exclusive of the day of such service; and if you fail to do so, judgment by default will be rendered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.
TO MINOR(S) OVER FOURTEEN YEARS OF AGE, AND/OR TO MINOR(S) UNDER FOURTEEN YEARS OF AGE AND THE PERSON WITH WHOM THE MINOR(S) RESIDES, AND/OR TO PERSONS UNDER SOME LEGAL DISABILITY:
YOU ARE FURTHER SUMMONED AND NOTIFIED to apply for the appointment of a guardian ad litem within thirty (30) days after the service of this Summons and Notice upon you. If you fail to do so, application for such appointment will be made by Attorney for Plaintiff.
YOU WILL ALSO TAKE NOTICE that Plaintiff will move for an Order of Reference or the Court may issue a general Order of Reference of this action to a Master-in-Equity/Special Referee, pursuant to Rule 53 of the South Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure.
YOU WILL ALSO TAKE NOTICE that under the provisions of S.C. Code Ann. § 29-3-100, effective June 16, 1993, any collateral assignment of rents contained in the referenced Mortgage is perfected and Attorney for Plaintiff hereby gives notice that all rents shall be payable directly to it by delivery to its undersigned attorneys from the date of default. In the alternative, Plaintiff will move before a judge of this Circuit on the 10th day after service hereof, or as soon thereafter as counsel may be heard, for an Order enforcing the assignment of rents, if any, and compelling payment of all rents covered by such assignment directly to the Plaintiff, which motion is to be based upon the original Note and Mortgage herein and the Complaint attached hereto.
LIS PENDENS
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT an action has been or will be commenced in this Court upon complaint of the above-named Plaintiff against the above-named Defendant(s) for the foreclosure of a certain mortgage of real estate given by Suzanne Robinson to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for United Community Bank dated July 18, 2024 and recorded on July 22, 2024 in Book 1329 at Page 2326, in the Sumter County Registry (hereinafter, "Mortgage"). Thereafter, the Mortgage was transferred to the Plaintiff herein by assignment and/or corporate merger.
The premises covered and affected by the said Mortgage and by the foreclosure thereof were, at the time of the making thereof and at the time of the filing of this notice, more particularly described in the said Mortgage and are more commonly described as:
All that certain piece, parcel or lot of land, with the improvements thereon, if any, situate, lying and being in the County of Sumter, State of South Carolina, being shown and designated as Lot 5, Block 2, on a plat prepared by Harmon D. Moise, Surveyor, and recorded September 30, 1903, in the Office of the Register of Deeds for Sumter County in Plat Book TTT at Page 166. The said lot has such metes, bounds, courses and distances as are shown on said plat, which is incorporated herein by reference.
This being the same property conveyed to Suzanne Robinson by deed of Meyer Capital Acquisitions LLC dated July 5, 2024, and recorded July 22, 2024, in Book 1329 at Page 2322 in the Office of the Register of Deeds for Sumter County, South Carolina.

TMS No. 227-03-03-008
Property Address:
612 W Oakland Ave,
Sumter, SC 29150

NOTICE OF FILING COMPLAINT
TO THE DEFENDANTS ABOVE NAMED:
YOU WILL PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the original Complaint and Certificate of Exemption from ADR in the above-entitled action were filed in the Office of the Clerk of Court for Sumter County on September 15, 2025. A Notice of Foreclosure Intervention was also filed in the Clerk of Court's Office.
ORDER APPOINTING GUARDIAN AD LITEM NISI
It appearing to the satisfaction of the Court, upon reading the filed Petition for Appointment of Kelley Woody, Esquire as Guardian ad Litem Nisi for unknown minors, and persons who may be under a legal disability, and it appearing that Kelley Woody, Esquire has consented to said appointment, it is
ORDERED that Kelley Woody, P.O. Box 6432, Columbia, SC 29260 phone (803) 787-9678, be and hereby is appointed Guardian ad Litem Nisi on behalf of all unknown minors and all unknown persons who may be under a legal disability, all of whom may have or claim to have some interest or claim to the real property commonly known as 612 W Oakland Ave, Sumter, SC 29150; that he is empowered and directed to appear on behalf of and represent said Defendants, unless said Defendants, or someone on their behalf, shall within thirty (30) days after service of a copy hereof as directed, procure the appointment of Guardian or Guardians ad Litem for said Defendants.
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that a copy of this Order shall be forth with served upon said Defendants by publication in The Item, a newspaper of general circulation published in the County of Sumter, State of South Carolina, once a week for three (3) consecutive weeks, together with the Summons and Notice of Filing of Complaint in the above-entitled action.
AND IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Appointment of Kelley Woody, Esquire shall become Absolute 30 days after the completion of service of this Order without further motion by Plaintiff or Order of this Court unless said Defendants, or persons acting on their behalf, shall, within thirty (30) days after service, procure the appointment of their own Guardian Ad Litem.

Brock & Scott, PLLC
3800 Fernandina Road,
Suite 110
Columbia, SC 29210
Phone (803) 454-3540
Fax (803) 454-3541
Attorneys for Plaintiff

**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
IN THE PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF SUMTER
CASE NO. 2025-ES43-00186
SUMMONS AND NOTICE OF FILING
IN THE MATTER OF:
Gladys Porcher McDonald (Decedent)**

**Calvin Leonard McDonald,
Petitioner,
vs.
Richard McDonald,
Simeon McDonald,
Eula V. McDonald, et. Al.
Respondents.**

**TO THE RESPONDENTS RICHARD MCDONALD AND SIMEON MCDONALD:
YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and required to answer the Petition in this action, a copy of which is herewith served upon you, and to serve a copy of your Answer to said Petition to the subscriber, William L. Pyatt, at the address shown below, within THIRTY (30) DAYS after the service thereof, exclusive of the date of such service; and if you fail to answer the Petition within the time aforesaid, or otherwise appear and defend, judgment by default will be rendered against you for the relief demanded in the Petition.
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Summons and Petition in the above-entitled action were filed in the Office of the Sumter County Probate Court, South Carolina, on September 15, 2025 and a copy of the said pleadings will be furnished to you as required by law.**

**William L. Pyatt
S.C. Bar No. 4599
PYATT LAW FIRM, LLC
Post Office Box 12041
Columbia, SC 29211
November 25, 2025**

**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
IN THE PROBATE COURT
FOR SUMTER COUNTY
IN THE MATTER OF
EMMA BURGESS PRINCE
DECEDENT
CASE NO. 2025-ES43-623
SUMMONS**

**ORA LEE PRINCE
Petitioner(s),
v.
ANN PRINCE, WILLIE LEE PRINCE, PATRICIA MILLER, ALYCE BLOOD, DAVID PRINCE, AARON PRINCE, CLIFTON PRINCE, MICHAEL PRINCE, AKIA PRINCE, KENYATTA PRINCE, MONEE PRINCE, CHERIS PRINCE, LENISE PRINCE, DEREK PRINCE, LETISHA MERVILUS, DEMICA MORRIS, RENISE MORRIS, MARY ANN PRINCE, EMMA COOKS, BRENDA EDUARDO, AUDREY KONEGAY, ISAIAH ZEKE PRINCE, CHRISTOPHER PRINCE, MARY PRINCE, ARNOLD PRINCE, RONNIE PRINCE, TUKPMUA BIVENS, ADOLPH PRINCE, SHANEKA JONES, JOYCE ANN PRINCE, BRANDON PRINCE, WILLIAM PRINCE, KENNETH PRINCE, SYLVIA TURNER, MELISSA BUFORD, ANTHONY WILLIAMS, ZUELDA WILLIAMS SMITH, WAYNE JOHNSON, JOSEPY PRINCE, LENDALE PRINCE, LONDELL PRINCE, JANET HICKSON, RENEE PRINCE, AND FOR ANY PERSONS UNKNOWN WHO ARE OR MIGHT CLAIM TO BE HEIRS OF THE DECEDENT, INCLUDING ANY UNKNOWN PERSONS IN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, ANY MINORS, PERSON NON COMPOS MENTIS AND PERSONS UNDER A DISABILITY OF ANY KIND OR NATURE.
Respondents.**

**TO THE RESPONDENTS LISTED ABOVE:
YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and required to Answer the Petition in this action, a copy of which is herewith served upon you, and to serve a copy of you Answer upon the Petitioner(s) listed above at the following address(es):
J. David Weeks
Weeks Law Office, LLC
P. O. Box 370
Sumter, Sc 29151
Your Answer must be served on the Petitioner at the above address within thirty (30) days after the service of this Summons and Petition upon you, exclusive of the day of such service; and if you fail to answer the Petition within that time, judgement by default will be rendered against you for the relief demanded in the Petition.**

**ORDER APPOINTING GUARDIAN AD LITEM NISI
NOTICE IS HERERBY GIVEN, that Attorney Calvin K. Hastie, 7 East Hampton Avenue, Sumter, South Carolina has been appointed as the Guardian ad Litem Nisi field on October 6, 2025, in the Sumter County Probate Court the original Petition in the above action together with the Summons was filed in the Probate Court for Sumter County on September 12, 2025.**

**J. David Weeks
Weeks Law Office, LLC
P. O. Box 370
Sumter, SC 29151
ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFFS**

**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
IN THE PROBATE COURT
FOR SUMTER COUNTY
IN THE MATTER OF
WILLIE WOODROW PRINCE, SR
DECEDENT
CASE NO. 2025-ES43-156
SUMMONS**

**ORA LEE PRINCE
Petitioner(s),
v.
EMMA BURGESS PRINCE, WILLIE PRINCE JR., WILLIE JAMES PRINCE, CURTIS PRINCE, IZZIAH PRINCE, RUBY PRINCE JOHNSON, JONNIE PRINCE AMIS AND FOR ANY PERSONS UNKNOWN WHO ARE OR MIGHT CLAIM TO BE HEIRS OF THE DECEDENT, INCLUDING ANY UNKNOWN PERSONS IN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, ANY MINORS, PERSON NON COMPOS MENTIS AND PERSONS UNDER A DISABILITY OF ANY KIND OR NATURE,
Respondents.**

**TO THE RESPONDENTS LISTED ABOVE:
YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and required to Answer the Petition in this action, a copy of which is herewith served upon you, and to serve a copy of you Answer upon the Petitioner(s) listed above at the following address(es):
J. David Weeks
Weeks Law Office, LLC
P. O. Box 370
Sumter, Sc 29151
Your Answer must be served on the Petitioner at the above address within thirty (30) days after the service of this Summons and Petition upon you, exclusive of the day of such service; and if you fail to answer the Petition within that time, judgement by default will be rendered against you for the relief demanded in the Petition.**

**ORDER APPOINTING GUARDIAN AD LITEM NISI
NOTICE IS HERERBY GIVEN, that Attorney Calvin K. Hastie, 7 East Hampton Avenue, Sumter, South Carolina has been appointed as the Guardian ad Litem Nisi field on October 6, 2025, in the Sumter County Probate Court the original Petition in the above action together with the Summons was filed in the Probate Court for Sumter County on September 12, 2025.**

**NOTICE OF FILING PETITION
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the original Petition in the above action, together with the Summons, was filed in the Probate Court for Sumter County on September 12, 2025.**

**J. David Weeks
Weeks Law Office, LLC
P. O. Box 370
Sumter, SC 29151
ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFFS**

Estate Notice Sumter County

NOTICE TO CREDITORS OF ESTATES

Persons having claim against the following estates are required to deliver or mail their claims to the indicated Personal Representatives, appointed to administer these estates, and to file their claims on Form #371PC with the Probate Court of Sumter County Courthouse, N. Main Street, Sumter, SC, 29150, on or before the date that is eight months after the date of the first publication of this Notice to Creditors, (unless previously barred by operation of Section 62-3-803), or such persons shall be forever barred as to heir claims. All claims are required to be presented in written statements, indicating the name and the address of the claimant, the basis of the claim, the amount claimed, the date when the claim will become due, the nature of any uncertainty as to the amount claimed and the date when due, and a description of any security as to the claim.

Estate: Julius AKA Jules E. Eldridge, Jr.
2025ES4300797

Personal Representative:
Frances K. Eldridge
118 Snowden St.
Sumter, SC 29150

Julius Ernest Eldridge III
910 Santee Dr.
Florence, SC 29501

Kerry L. Murphy
Attorney at Law
2512 Devine St.
Columbia, SC 29205

Estate: Geraldine Frances Ingersoll
2025ES4300777

Personal Representative:
Barbara Ann Kucharczyk
40 Chursh St.
Sumter, SC 29150

Marvin E. McMillan, Jr.
Attorney at Law
PO Box 3690
Sumter, SC 29151

Estate Notice Sumter County

NOTICE TO CREDITORS OF ESTATES

Persons having claim against the following estates are required to deliver or mail their claims to the indicated Personal Representatives, appointed to administer these estates, and to file their claims on Form #371PC with the Probate Court of Sumter County Courthouse, N. Main Street, Sumter, SC, 29150, on or before the date that is eight months after the date of the first publication of this Notice to Creditors, (unless previously barred by operation of Section 62-3-803), or such persons shall be forever barred as to heir claims. All claims are required to be presented in written statements, indicating the name and the address of the claimant, the basis of the claim, the amount claimed, the date when the claim will become due, the nature of any uncertainty as to the amount claimed and the date when due, and a description of any security as to the claim.

Estate: William Reed
2025ES4300792

Personal Representative:
Zamyra Rogers
1235 Rockwood Road
Columbia, SC 29209

Estate: Patton Kelley Kern
2025ES4300744

Personal Representative:
Linda D. Kern
3000 Tamarah Way
Sumter, SC 29154

Estate: Linda Bell Nettles
2025ES4300793

Personal Representative:
Donald Nettles
540 Lakewood Dr.
Sumter, SC 29150

James Corbett
Attorney at Law
PO Box 11006
Columbia, SC 29211

Estate: Wesley Abraham McCray
2025ES4300781

Personal Representative:
Catherine McCray
6275 Shetland St.
Sumter, SC 29150

Estate: Drafus Ford
2025ES4300789

Personal Representative:
Lottie L. Ford
20 Idaho Dr.
Sumter, SC 29153

Estate: Judy M. McClam
2025ES4300785

Personal Representative:
John Derrick McClam
1681 Melodie Lane
Sumter, SC 29153

Estate: Nancy Marie Wheeler Lowery
2025ES4300780

Personal Representative:
Woodrow W. Wells III
1955 Adirondack Ct.
Sumter, SC 29153

Estate: Alphonse Young
2025ES4300776

Personal Representative:
Shakeena Alise Wallace
3125 Kaempfer Cir.
Sumter, SC 29153

Estate: Sylvia Ann Hubbard
2025ES4300801

Personal Representative:
Alan R. Hubbard, Jr.
1592 Lake Shore Dr.
Manning, SC 29102

Estate: Rita Elaine Bullock
2025ES4300773

Personal Representative:
Abraham Bullock
600 Shipwatch Dr.
Sumter, SC 29154

Dwight C. Moore
Attorney at Law
PO Box 1229
Sumter, SC 29151

Estate: Iris Lynne Long
2025ES4300796

Personal Representative:
Kelly L. Long
1375 Hidden Oaks Dr.
Wedgefield, SC 29168

Estate: William James Dyer, Sr.
2025ES4300775

Personal Representative:
Kendrick G. Dyer
3712 Kingston Ct.
Valdosta, GA 31605

Estate: Gaynell Cooper
2025ES4300800

Personal Representative:
Brian A. Boyd, Sr.
955 One Mile Road
Gable, SC 29051

J. David Weeks
Attorney at Law
PO Box 370
Sumter, SC 29151

Estate: Atchara Sooksawasdi Matter
2025ES4300778

Personal Representative:
Edward B. Matter
5606 Whisperwood Dr.
Dalzell, SC 29040

Estate: Pamela Price
2025ES4300779

Personal Representative:
Bridgett Zeigler
680 Mallard Dr.
Sumter, SC 29150

Estate: Kelvorius Epperson
2025ES4300771

Personal Representative:
Latania Epperson
3290 Homestead Rd
Sumter, SC 29153

Kelsey Willey
Attorney at Law
PO Box 313
Sullivans Island, SC 29482

Notice of Sale

**NOTICE OF SALE 2025-CP-43-01038
BY VIRTUE of a decree heretofore granted in the case of: Planet Home Lending, LLC against Lee Baran and Castle Credit Co Holdings, LLC, I, the undersigned Master in Equity for Sumter County, will sell on January 5, 2026, at 12:00 p.m., or on another date, thereafter as approved by the Court, at the County Judicial Center in Sumter, South Carolina, to the highest bidder, the following described property, to-wit: All that certain piece, parcel or lot of land with the improvements thereon, if any, situate, lying and being in the County of Sumter, State of South Carolina identified as Lot No. 68 of Gingko Hills Subdivision Phase 2 and being more fully show on a plat prepared by Michael C. Turbeville, III, PLS dated March 15, 2006 and recorded in the Office of the Register of Deeds for Sumter County in Plat Book PB 2006 at Page 374. This said lot has such metes, boundaries, courses and distances as are shown on said plat, which are incorporated herein in accordance with the provisions of section 30-5-250 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976. This being the same property conveyed to Lee Baran by deed of Clinton B. Garrett and Sarah D. Garrett dated August 19, 2020 and recorded August 24, 2020 in Book 1272 at Page 4892. TMS No. 200-09-02-015 Property Address: 3065 Kaempfer Circle, Sumter, SC 29153
All persons in attendance are subject to having their temperature taken (non-touch or temple touch). Anyone that is visually or audibly symptomatic (fever, cough, shortness of breath, nasal or throat congestion, etc.) may be denied in person participation. Anyone that is otherwise symptomatic (loss of taste or smell, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.) should not attend. Masks or facial coverings are not required but may be worn. Social distancing will be observed with at least six foot distancing between participants. TERMS OF SALE: The successful bidder, other than the plaintiff, will deposit with the Master in Equity at conclusion of the bidding, five per cent (5%) of said bid, in cash or equivalent, as evidence of good faith, same to be applied to purchase price in case of compliance, but to be forfeited and applied first to costs and then to plaintiff's debt in the case of noncompliance. Should the successful bidder fail or refuse to make the required deposit at time of bid or comply with the other terms of the bid within thirty (30) days, then the Master in Equity may resell the property on the same terms and conditions (at the risk of the said defaulting bidder). Should the Plaintiff, or one of its representatives, fail to be present at the time of sale, the property is automatically withdrawn from said sale and sold at the next available sales day upon the terms and conditions as set forth in the Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale or any Supplemental Order. The successful bidder will be required to pay for documentary stamps on the Deed and interest on the balance of the bid from the date of sale to the date of compliance with the bid at the rate of 5.6250%. THIS SALE IS SUBJECT TO ASSESSMENTS, COUNTY TAXES, EXISTING EASEMENTS, EASEMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS OF RECORD, AND OTHER SENIOR ENCUMBRANCES. Since a deficiency judgment is being demanded, the bidding will remain open for thirty (30) days after the date of sale, pursuant to S.C. Code ANN. Section 15-39-720, (1976). The deficiency judgment may be waived by the Plaintiff upon written request prior to sale. NOTICE: The foreclosure deed is not a warranty deed. Interested bidders should satisfy themselves as to the quality of title to be conveyed by obtaining an independent title search well before the foreclosure sale date. Riley Pope & Laney, LLC Post Office Box 11412 Columbia, SC 29211 (803) 799-9993 Attorneys for Plaintiff 7458**



Announcements

Replace your roof with the best-looking and longest-lasting material: steel from Erie Metal Roofs! Three styles and multiple colors available. Guaranteed to last a lifetime! Limited time offer up to 50% off installation + additional 10% off install (for military, health workers & 1st responders). Call Erie Metal Roofs: 1-855-900-1261

DENTAL INSURANCE from Physicians Mutual Insurance Company. Coverage for 400- plus procedures. Real dental insurance- NOT just a discount plan. Do not wait! Call now! Get your FREE Dental Information Kit with all the details! 1-855-397-7030 www.dental50plus.com/60 #6258

Portable Oxygen Concentrator may be covered by Medicare! Reclaim independence and mobility with the compact design and long-lasting battery of Inogen One. Free information kit! Call 833-230-8692.



In Memory

MEMORIAL



**Sandra (Sandi) Prytash Smith
02/12/1944 - 12/14/2020**

Sandi was the loving wife and dearest friend to Dr. Richard L. Smith. She deeply loved her husband, sons, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.
Sandi treasured meeting new people and helping them improve their appearance and self-esteem. Her gift is a lifetime of wonderful memories.



Roofing

FOR RENT, 2 BR, 2 BA, at Wyboo Lake Area. Call (803) 478-2950

ROOFING Having problems with your roof? Call Robert Nunnery (803) 478-2950 Expert Repair Work & Free estimates

Tree Service

Ricky's Tree Service Tree removal, forestry mulching, stump grinding, Lic & ins, free quote, 803-473-2202 or cell 803-460-8747.

Satellite Sales & Service

DIRECTV- All your entertainment. Nothing on your roof! Sign up for Directv and get your first three months of Max, Paramount+, Showtime, Starz, MGM+ and Cinemax included. Choice package $84.99/mo. Some restrictions apply. Call DIRECTV 1-844-624-1107

DIRECTV OVER INTERNET- Get your favorite live TV, sports and local channels. 99% signal reliability! CHOICE Package, $84.99/mo for 12 months. HBO Max and Premium Channels included for 3 mos (w/ CHOICE Package or higher.) No annual contract, no hidden fees! Some restrictions apply. Call IVS 1-855-237-9741

Get DISH Satellite TV + Internet! Free install, free HD-DVR upgrade, 80,000 on-demand movies, plus limited time up to $600 in gift cards. Call today! 1-877-542-0759.



Auctions

ADVERTISE YOUR AUCTION in 80 S.C. newspapers for only $375. Your 25-word classified ad will reach more than 1.5 million readers. Call Randall Savely at the S.C. Newspaper Network, 1-803-750-9561.

Lawn / Garden / Nursery

Lawn, Flowerbed, Shrubbery, Leaf, & Pine Straw Service. Yards starting at $35. Pressure washing services. Call Bobby 803-983-5364.



Help Wanted Part-Time

We are seeking an organized, tech-savvy, and reliable Cleaner with strong multi-tasking abilities. This part-time position offers a flexible schedule to help you balance personal and professional commitments. The role includes a competitive weekly salary of $450. To apply, please email: philshloth_clean @aol.com.

Trucking Opportunities

ADVERTISE YOUR DRIVER JOBS in 80 S.C. newspapers for only $375. Your 25-word classified ad will reach more than 1.5 million readers. Call Randall Savely at the S.C. Newspaper Network, 1-803-750-9561.

YOUR AD HERE



Vacation Rentals

ADVERTISE YOUR VACATION PROPERTY FOR RENT OR SALE to more than 1.5 million S.C. newspaper readers. Your 25-word classified ad will appear in 80 S.C. newspapers for only $375. Call Randall Savely at the South Carolina Newspaper Network, 1-803-750-9561.



Homes for Sale

We Buy Houses for Cash AS IS! No repairs. No fuss. Any condition. Easy three step process: Call, get cash offer and get paid. Get your fair cash offer today by calling Liz Buys Houses: 1-855-704-3381

Land & Lots for Sale

Cleared Lot for Sale, Located in Silver near 1086 Garlie Circle (Pinewood) $12,000 Septic tank & water line to hook into. Must see to appreciate! Call (803) 410-4095



Miscellaneous

Prepare for power outages today with a GENERAC Home Standby Generator. Act now to receive a FREE 5-year warranty with qualifying purchase. Call 1-844-775-0366 today to schedule a free quote. It's not just a generator. It's a power move.







Office Of Sumter County Council
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
Ordinance #25-1036

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the County Council for Sumter County, South Carolina, will hold a public hearing on **Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at 6 0'clock P.M.**, or as soon thereafter as practicable, as said hearing can be convened, in connection with:

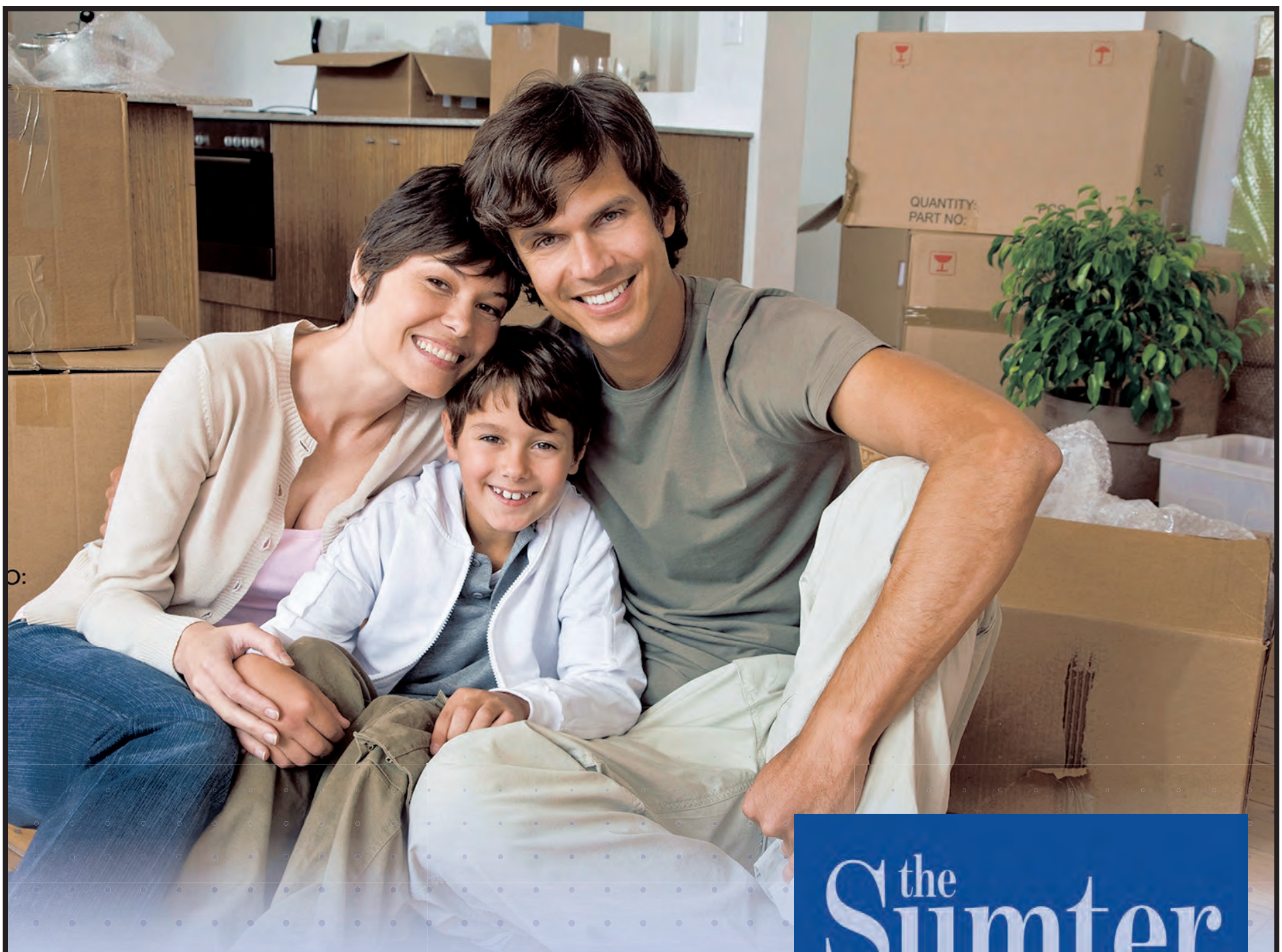
AUTHORIZING (1) THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A FEE-IN-LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES AND INCENTIVE AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN SUMTER COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA (THE "COUNTY") AND PROJECT PEANUT ACTING FOR THEMSELVES, ONE OR MORE AFFILIATES, AND/OR OTHER PROJECT SPONSORS (COLLECTIVELY, THE "SPONSOR") TO PROVIDE FOR PAYMENT OF A FEE-IN-LIEU OF TAXES; (2) CERTAIN INFRASTRUCTURE CREDITS; (3) THE BENEFITS OF A MULTI-COUNTY INDUSTRIAL OR BUSINESS PARK TO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE PROJECT; (4) THE SALE OF COUNTY OWNED PROPERTY BEING IDENTIFIED AS A 47.02 +/- ACRE PORTION OF PARCEL #3 OF THE POCOTALIGO INDUSTRIAL PARK; (5) AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

This public hearing will be held in the Chambers of the said County Council on the third floor of the S**umter County Administration Building, 13 E. Canal Street, Sumter, SC,** or at such other location within the said County as proper notice might specify.

A copy of the said ordinance can be viewed on the County's website or obtained from the Clerk to Council through email – clerk@sumtercountysc.gov. The public is invited to participate in the public hearing.
Dated this 3rd day of December 2025.

The County Council for Sumter, S. C.
By: James T. McCain, Jr., Chairman
Sumter County Council
Sterling Mitchum, Clerk to Council





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