



Condensed religion?

"Light Speed Bible" uses speed-reading tactics for 24-hour read. **Faith & Values**



Too much Tigers

Clemson overpowers Charleston Southern in matchup. **Sports**

The Post and Courier

THE SOUTH'S OLDEST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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SUNDAY

Founded 1803 ★★ \$1.50

Sunday best

Bridge supports leaving a lasting impression

Demolition crews are removing only part of the supports for the old Cooper River bridges, and the leftover concrete might complicate redevelopment. **1B**

Ghostly Dickens classic gets high-tech treatment

Ghosts flitting through the air and fireworks lighting up London during a blizzard are just two of the high-tech special effects that are featured in the \$15,000 production "A Christmas Carol — A Ghost Story of Christmas" at Dock Street Theatre. **1F**



Car bombs kill 10 in Iraq; election workers fired on

Bombs in Samarra and Baghdad killed 10, while gunmen fired on campaign workers putting up posters for next month's parliamentary elections. **2AA**

Cooling home market looks good for buyers

The national housing market has shown signs of a slow-down, and experts say the trend likely will continue. **1D**

Christmas on the tube

Our holiday TV schedule highlights the best of the season's specials and film offerings. **1F**



Coming Up



FILE/AP

Hitting the slopes

If you are planning to do some skiing this winter, our three-part series will help you get started.

TUESDAY IN GET OUT!: Selecting the best ski destinations.

FRIDAY IN FASHION: Looking good and staying warm on the slopes.

DEC. 5 IN HEALTH SCIENCE: Getting your muscles ready for action.



Today's outlook

Mostly cloudy with a few showers. High 69. Low 60. 5-day forecast, **12B**.

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Setting the record straight..... **2A**

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Van assembly jobs on way

A promotional photo shows a 2005 Sprinter 2500 van. DaimlerChrysler AG is expected to announce plans Monday to move U.S. assembly of the van to North Charleston.



DODGE

Dodge Sprinter deal could bring 1,800 jobs, \$400M in investment

BY JOHN P. MCDERMOTT
The Post and Courier

DaimlerChrysler AG is expected to unveil plans Monday to shift the U.S. assembly of the Dodge Sprinter cargo van to its North Charleston plant, a move that could bring at least 1,800 manufacturing jobs and more than \$400 million in investment to the region if all goes as planned.

The deal was finalized last week, when executives from the automaker traveled from Germany to South Carolina to discuss an incentive agreement and other details, a state official involved in the negotiations said.

"It kind of all fell into place," said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

DaimlerChrysler is looking to spend about \$40 million to retool its existing American LaFrance facility starting in early 2006 so it can begin Sprinter production there by the end of next year.

Please see **VAN**, Page 9A

Bears in state's coastal zone under development pressure



RICKY THOMAS

A black bear caught by a motion-sensor camera in 2002 on Ricky Thomas' property in the Francis Marion National Forest.

Reclusive predators blocked by highways from migration routes

BY CHRIS DIXON
The Post and Courier

During 2005, motor vehicles have killed a record number of black bears along South Carolina's coastal highways.

By the end of October, the state Department of Natural Resources reported 24 bears were confirmed killed from the North Carolina state line to the Francis Marion National Forest, a number already higher than the 20 total deaths in each of the previous two years. Reclusive and seldom seen, these predators roam from the state line down into the Francis Marion, where they appear to be arriving in increasing numbers.

Though relatively little is known about the coastal bear population, roughly estimated to number between 200 and 300, state and federal biologists say development and roads are putting heavy pressure on bears and might cut them off from traditional migratory routes into North Carolina, where an estimated 7,000 bears roam the state's coastal zone. This could leave the future of South Carolina's bears in question.



ALAN HAWES/STAFF

Ricky Thomas photographed a black bear at his deer feeder with a motion-sensor camera behind his home in the Francis Marion National Forest.

"There are a lot of people who have lived for years in areas with high numbers of bears and don't even know they're there," said DNR biologist Jamie Dozier. "I've had people call me and say, 'You're going to think I'm crazy, but there's a bear walking in my backyard.' I say, 'No, I don't think you're crazy at all.'"

According to Dozier and fellow DNR bi-

ologist Sam Chappellear, the highest concentration of black bears in the coastal region can be found in Louis Ocean Bay, a 9,383-acre wildlife refuge mere miles inland from Myrtle Beach. Here, along shallow, elliptical bodies of water called Carolina Bays, bears weighing up to 400

Please see **BEARS**, Page 9A

Ineligible buyers get guns

Mental health records missing from database

BY MARK SHERMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In Alabama, a man with a history of mental illness killed two police officers with a rifle he bought on Christmas Eve.

In suburban New York, a schizophrenic walked into a church during Mass and shot to death a priest and a parishioner.

In Texas, a woman taking anti-psychotic medication used a shotgun to kill herself.

Not one of their names was in a database that licensed gun dealers must check before making sales, even though federal law prohibits the mentally ill from purchasing guns.

Most states have privacy laws barring such information from being shared with law enforcement. Legislation pending in Congress that has bipartisan support seeks to get more of the disqualifying records in the database.

In addition to mandating the sharing of mental health records, the legislation would require that states improve their computerized record-keeping for felony records and domestic violence restraining orders and convictions, which also are supposed to bar people from purchasing guns.

Similar measures, opposed by some advocates for the mentally ill and gun-rights groups, did not pass Congress in 2002 and 2004.

The FBI, which maintains the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, has not taken a position on the bill, but the bureau is blunt about what adding names to its database would do.

"The availability of this information will save lives," the FBI said in a recent report.

More than 53 million background checks for gun sales have been conducted since 1998, when the NICS replaced a five-day waiting period. More than 850,000 sales have been denied, the FBI reported. In most of those cases, the applicant had a criminal record.

Legislation sponsored by Rep. Carolyn McCarthy, D-N.Y., says millions of records are either missing or incomplete. "The computer is only as good as the information you put in it," McCarthy said.

Please see **GUNS**, Page 8A

Fund works to bring good cheer to holidays

BY JAMES SCOTT
The Post and Courier

Most kids wake up on Christmas morning in a warm house, surrounded by family and eager to open gifts.

Kate Lloyd knows first-hand that there are some children who can only dream of that.

As the director of development for Carolina Youth Development, Lloyd and others in her organization work to make

Christmas better for children living in the agency's shelters, away from family.

"For many people, it's impossible to imagine being in a strange place at Christmas," said Lloyd, whose organization runs two emergency shelters for children who have been removed from their homes by the state.

On Monday, The Post and Courier will begin collecting donations for the Good Cheer Fund. Now in its 78th year, the fund helps five local charitable organi-

zations provide a more joyous Christmas for those in need.

In addition to Carolina Youth Development, The Salvation Army, Star Gospel Mission, the Association for the Blind and Catholic Charities benefit from the annual fund. Participants say the fund is invaluable to their organizations and the community.

Founded in 1927 by former News and

Please see **CHEER**, Page 8A

Donations



Good Cheer

Tax-deductible donations to the Good Cheer Fund can be made in the form of cash or checks as individual contributions, in memory of a loved one, in lieu of Christmas cards or anonymously. Please send donations to the Good Cheer Fund, c/o The Post and Courier, 134 Columbus St., Charleston, S.C. 29403-4800.