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Memorial Day
means summer
fun is at hand. 2B

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U.S. 17 panel makes recommendations

Most controversial issue facing task force is how plans to extend road would affect rural areas

BY CHRIS DIXON
The Post and Courier

Members of a task force charged with steering the future of the U.S. Highway 17 corridor through northern Mount Pleasant made their initial recommendations Tuesday night. Though it will not vote on the recommendations until early June, the Highway 17 Corridor Task Force agreed to create consistent low-density urban and commercial zoning for both incorporated and unincorporated areas; push for protections for sweetgrass basket stands, and to submit two controversial ideas for

extensions to Hungryneck Boulevard. The task force was created by the town of Mount Pleasant, Charleston County and the Coastal Community Foundation as a way for residents living in an area roughly between the Isle of Palms Connector, Porcher's Bluff Road, U.S. 17 and Rifle Range Road to address traffic, neighborhood infrastructure, future growth and create consistent zoning between incorporated and unincorporated areas. The recommendations will be submitted to planning commissions and councils of Charleston County

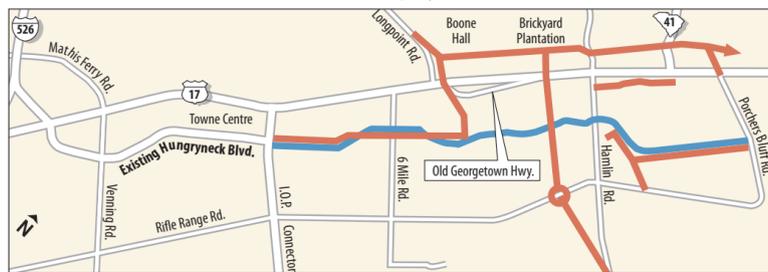
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Conceptual alternate plans to extend Hungryneck Blvd.

A Members of Six Mile, Seven Mile and Hamlin communities have suggested bringing Hungryneck Blvd. to Long Point Rd. and then connecting it with a new north-south route running through Boone Hall Plantation's farms. Construction of smaller surface streets has also been suggested.

B Mount Pleasant favors creating a 3 or 4 lane road through mostly undeveloped land that lies adjacent to historic black communities.

SOURCE: MOUNT PLEASANT



GILL GUERRY/STAFF

Digging into the past



WADE SPEES/STAFF

A gravesite was unearthed during the site preparation for an addition to Circular Congregational Church's educational building Tuesday. Bioarchaeologist Kristrina Shuler (left) was called in to examine the find. Construction supervisor Sammy Sanders (right) works with church officials on how to handle the discovery.

Church finds hidden graves while excavating building site

BY ALMAR FLOTILDES
The Post and Courier

While doing preliminary demolition work at the Circular Congregational Church that will eventually lead to an addition, NBM Construction encountered a hidden grave site under the construction site.

The crew found what appeared to be two caskets at the Meeting Street church.

A church staff member said 15 to 20 headstones were found already, and that such finds are not a surprise, considering the church dates from the Colonial period.

"They had pretty good records" for the remains at the church site, said Sammy Sanders, supervisor for the construction at Circular.

A funeral director and archaeologists are expected to meet this morning to decide the fate of the findings.

The archaeologists, including Kristrina Shuler of Brockington Cultural Resources Consulting, specialize in physical anthropology with experience in some of the major cemetery relocation projects in downtown Charleston.

Circular Congregational was founded by Charles Towne's original settlers in 1681 and is one of the two earliest churches in South Carolina. It is one of the oldest continuously worshipping congregations in the South.

Shuler, who saw the site at Circular on Tuesday morning, was involved in the 2004 excavation of dozens of graves beneath the former west stands of The Citadel's Johnson Hagood stadium.

Construction has come to a halt until the archaeologists confirm the contents of the caskets and possible other remains at the site. According to Sanders, the crew will probably plan to remove the remains and relocate them in the front of the church when ready.

"We are just trying to build a suitable building to last 100 years, as long as the original," said Susan Dunn, lay minister for the church.

The construction has been a five-year

process so far, she said. Circular Congregational was founded by Charles Towne's original settlers in 1681 and is one of the two earliest churches in South Carolina. It is one of the oldest continuously worshipping congregations in the South.

The graveyard itself is the city's oldest burial grounds, with its monuments dating to 1696. The first meeting house on this site gave Meeting Street its name.

While many gravestones have disappeared throughout the years, more than 500 remain along with about 730 names inscribed on those stones. Another 620 people are named in the church's records with likely indications that they were buried in the graveyard.

The earliest unmarked grave at the church's cemetery dates to 1695, according to church records. The earliest inscribed gravestone was in 1729. The number of burials before 1776 numbered to 150, and the number of burials for people who were born before 1800 accounted to 450.

Reach Almar Flotildes at afltildes@postandcourier.com or 937-5548.

3 scholars wouldn't miss school for world

Seniors haven't skipped day since kindergarten

BY MINDY B. HAGEN
The Post and Courier

Richard "Andy" Steadman once watched a television show where a student was honored for achieving perfect attendance throughout his entire academic career.

The television feature prompted Andy's parents to issue a challenge. They wanted their kindergarten son to strive to match that accomplishment.

Twelve years later, Andy is set to graduate from Wando High School next week. And yes, he's made good on his pledge to attend class every day each year.

"I ended up making it through one year, and the next year, and the next thing I knew, it was five years and 10 years with perfect attendance," said Andy, the son of Richard and Sarah Steadman of Mount Pleasant.

Andy is one of three local students who will graduate having never missed a single day of school, from first grade through senior year of high school. He's joined by Dennis Clark of Stall High School and Ron Howard of Stratford High School in Berkeley County.

Across South Carolina, 73 high school seniors were recognized by the state Department of Education this year for their spotless attendance records.

"That's truly amazing — 2,160 days and never missing a single one," state Superintendent of Education Inez Tenenbaum said in a prepared statement. "There must have been a lot of days where these students could have stayed home for one reason or another, but they stayed focused and stayed on track."

At Wando, Andy is an honor student



Steadman



Clark



Howard

and member of the football and track teams. He said he felt an urge to join his classmates on senior skip day, but didn't want to jeopardize his streak.

"There were times where it was real hard with peer pressure, but I kept biting the bullet and going to school," said Andy, who plans to attend Wofford College and major in biology.

While Andy has tracked his stellar attendance since kindergarten, Dennis said he only asked administrators at Stall to check his records last month.

"My mom told me to ask about it, and that's when they told me I had perfect attendance for 12 years," he said. "It's hard to believe."

Dennis credited his mother, Diane Clark, for preaching the importance of attending

school every day.

"She felt that if I missed days of school, I was going to miss out on great things," said Dennis, who enjoys attending math and art classes and hopes to become an accountant.

Ron, who attends Stratford, also said he

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Businessman known for his generosity, A. Phillips, dies

BY JOHN P. MCDERMOTT
The Post and Courier

Ted Ashton Phillips, regarded as a generous businessman who never strayed far from his agricultural roots as he built one of South Carolina's biggest fertilizer distributors, died Tuesday. He was 67.

Phillips was co-founder and chairman of Charleston-based Carolina Eastern Inc., one of the state's largest privately held companies.

Longtime friends said Phillips was known for his love of the outdoors and his low-key generosity.

"Ashton was simply the most gener-



Phillips

ous man I have ever known, generous with his time, his friendship and his possessions," said Andy Anderson, president of Evening Post Publishing Co., which publishes The Post and Courier.

Dr. Horry H. Kerrison of Charleston said Phillips preferred to help others, from his employees to various

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Seabrook council OKs off-leash law for beach's protected plover habitat

BY BO PETERSEN
The Post and Courier

SEABROOK ISLAND — Dogs will be allowed off-leash in this private resort, on a stretch of the north beach that is considered critical habitat for the piping plover, a protected shorebird species.

Town Council voted 4-1 Tuesday to approve the law — a move nobody expects to quiet the contention that has riled residents of this low-key, gated community since council quietly passed first reading of the law earlier this year.

A spokeswoman for Coastal Conservation League, an environmental advocacy group, said she would speak to the

league's attorney about challenging the law. A U.S. Fish and Wildlife spokeswoman said service law enforcement officers would investigate reports of harassment of the birds, a violation of the federal Endangered Species Act.

Supporters said if dogs on the beach violated federal law, Fish and Wildlife would have barred the town law.

"We're delighted we have a place on the north end. It's relatively small, relatively remote. It's the perfect spot because it's away from people. The dogs can't go in the dunes; they can't go above high tide line. We're not in violation of any state

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To our readers

The Post and Courier will be published as usual on Memorial Day but the advertising, business and circulation offices of the newspaper at 134 Columbus St. and 6296 Rivers Ave. will be closed.

Deadline for classified advertising in Monday's and Tuesday's newspapers will be 3 p.m. Friday.

Circulation department operators will be on hand 6-9 a.m. Monday for calls about delivery problems.

Normal business hours for these departments will resume Tuesday.

Charleston County administrator moves retirement up to June 30

BY ROBERT BEHRE
The Post and Courier

Charleston County Administrator Roland Windham announced in November that he would retire at the end of this year. At the time, some council members had hoped he would change his mind.

But relations between County Council and its top staff member never improved, and Windham now plans to leave June 30.

Windham helped steer one of South Carolina's largest local governments for almost seven years, but his working relationship with council grew visibly tenser after January 2005, when new council members from single-member districts



Windham

took office. "There's no question that there's a different environment with the single-member districts. To be honest with you, that did play a role in my decision," he said Tuesday.

Windham previously oversaw Spartanburg County Council's transition from an at-large to single-member body, which he said went seamlessly.

"I think by most accounts that the

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