



PALMETTO POWER PLAY

Tigers dominate Seminoles | Gamecocks shock 12th-ranked Gators
Full college football coverage, 1E



The Post and Courier

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Sunday best

Egypt blocks action at democracy summit

The failure to agree on a draft declaration on democratic and economic principles was a blow to President Bush's goals for the Mideast. Meanwhile, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice used the conference to criticize political repression in Syria and to call for the release of political prisoners there. 13A



Rice



ALAN HAWES/STAFF

Dean Stephens kisses his son Sam as his wife, Caroline, holds him.

Family relied on faith during injury, recovery

When 11-month-old Sam was nearly killed in his driveway, his family was changed forever. WCIV anchorman Dean Stephens' family found that faith was what helped them to cope. 11

Schools officials say AYP results are misleading

School administrators say many schools in the state that missed their Adequate Yearly Progress by a couple of objectives did so because of the scores of students with disabilities. 1C

Trendy napkin rings bring style to the table

From skinny bands to wide cuffs that look like wrist bangles, and from metal to glass and crystal to feathers, napkin rings have never before brought so much style to the dining room table. 1H



Blast targets 500-foot section of Pearman

A span of the old bridge over Drum Island that weighs 1,000 tons is scheduled for demolition Tuesday morning. The 500-foot section is expected to break into 26 pieces. 1C



Today's outlook
Partly sunny.
High 77. Low 55.
Complete 5-day forecast, 12C.

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Hurdles just starting for Mark Clark

Extension must win funding, permits and council's support

BY ROBERT BEHRE
The Post and Courier

Completing the final leg of the Mark Clark Expressway would ease traffic congestion for those who drive Main Road on Johns Island or Maybank Highway on James Island.

If the road were completed, the number of cars driving those stretches each day would drop by about 5,000 or, in some cases, by as many as 20,000.

The project, which would build a new stretch of interstate highway from Citadel Mall to the James Island Expressway, also would help motorists who regularly drive along Folly Road from the James Island Connector into West Ashley, and it promises to lighten traffic on Savannah Highway.

Still, this new stretch of Interstate 526 — a \$420 million project that Charles-

ton County Council is asking the state to complete — won't help everyone. In fact, it promises to worsen congestion in some areas

Those driving on Maybank Highway on Johns Island could see more delays, as traffic counts between River and Bohicket roads would rise from about 26,000 a day to more than 38,000 a day by the year 2030.

And the effects go beyond the sea islands: S.C. Highway 61, Sam Rittenberg Boulevard, Montague Avenue and Interstate 26 also would see more cars each

day, though their increases wouldn't be as dramatic as the improvements to Main Road.

These figures come from a new computer model unveiled earlier this year by the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments, which handles the Lowcountry's regional highway plan. The model uses traffic counts, Census data and information on new developments to forecast how building a certain highway will affect other roads.

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Fighting nature's invaders



PHOTOGRAPHS BY WADE SPEEDS/STAFF

Furman Long of the Georgetown County chapter of The Nature Conservancy, has spent his lifetime on the area's rivers and is caretaker of Sandy Island.



Long says the sap around the hole in this longleaf pine is evidence of a red-cockaded woodpecker, which pecks above and below the hole to cause sap to run and provide a barrier from predators that are repelled by the turpentine such as snakes.

Conservancy has never-ending job at Sandy Island

BY CHRIS DIXON
The Post and Courier

Preserving an island that was once threatened with development is sometimes not as easy as allowing nature to take its course.

The 12,000-acre gem that is Sandy Island was at the center of controversy in the early 1990s, when there was a plan to bridge, log and develop the island.

Ultimately, the plan was defeated, and Sandy Island became the centerpiece of a successful effort that protected about 75,000 to 80,000 acres of wildlife habitat along the upper Winyah Bay north of Georgetown.

But since the island's dedication as a nature preserve, its hilly longleaf pine and oak forests, cypress swamps and vast salt marshes have been besieged by a variety of invaders that have made the mission of the conservation groups charged with putting it into its natural



Longleaf pine saplings sprout along a road on Sandy Island. Controlled burning characterizes the forest to the left; the forest on the right hasn't had a burn in 70 years, according to Furman Long. Here, the longleafs seem to be thriving under both conditions.

state more challenging and expensive than they ever imagined.

In the mossy shadow of a canopy of ancient live oaks last week, Furman Long surveyed the damage from a group of marauding pigs alongside a stretch of Sandy Island cypress swamp.

"When we took over," he said in a smooth drawl, "we didn't think we'd have the invasive problems. It was something that just developed in the past few years. We didn't have hogs, we didn't have

Please see ISLAND, Page 9A

Public officials surveyed on closed-door sessions

BY JIM DAVENPORT
Associated Press

COLUMBIA—A quarter of elected officials in a statewide survey say they've broken state law by letting their closed-door sessions stray beyond what they promised the public they would discuss while out of sight and earshot.

But public officials were agreeable to a solution that might keep them from breaking that promise in the future:

signing sworn statements that they don't stray when the public isn't there to hold them accountable.

Those are two key findings of an audit of board and council practices by The Associated Press, South Carolina Press Association and newspapers.

Nearly 200 county council and school board members responded to the 13-question survey. The survey is not a poll or a scientific sampling that would suggest what the typical public official would

do, but it does reflect how participants say they handle the privilege state law grants them to discuss some of the public's business in private.

Executive sessions are puzzling enough to citizens trying to observe how their elected officials handle taxpayers' business.

Last month, Cindy and Doug Myers went to their first Abbeville County Council meeting as they tried to prevent rezoning of property across the street

from their home. They found themselves waiting in the hall while the council went into executive session to discuss personnel and economic development issues.

"Anything that needs to be said should be said in public," Doug Myers said. "They're discussing public things, things that involve the public. I don't see why they should have a closed-door session at all."

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