NATION: Another House speaker nominee withdraws. **A9**



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Wednesday, October 25, 2023

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ENVIRONMENT

Renourishment pays dividends for Crab Bank



CHRISTY HAND/SCDNR/PROVIDED

During nesting season, March 15 to Oct. 15, Crab Bank is a seabird sanctuary and closed to the public. The 2023 nesting season concluded with "remarkable" results.

Second nesting season a 'remarkable' success, especially for black skimmers, least terns

BY TOBY COX tcox@postandcourier.com

The croaks, chirps and trills of approximately 2,600 nesting seabirds and their

SCHOOLS Mayors make appeal to CCSD

Amid controversies, beg the board to fix 'crisis of confidence'

BY JOCELYN GRZESZCZAK jgrzeszczak@postandcourier.com

The mayors of Charleston County's three largest municipalities pleaded with the county's embattled school board to put politics aside and prioritize students' education, saying they were prepared to ask state lawmakers to de-consolidate the school district if push came to shove.

Charleston Mayor John Tecklenburg, Mount Pleasant Mayor Will Haynie and North Charleston Mayor Keith Summey made their appeal at an Oct. 24 news conference inside North Charleston City Hall. State Rep. Joe Bustos, chairman of the local legislative delegation, also voiced his support for the mayors' plea.

Please see MAYORS, Page A15

EDUCATION

Clarendon schools didn't misuse funds, report says

BY TYLER FEDOR

fledglings were evidence of a successful second nesting season following the 2021 renourishment of Crab Bank.

The 2023 nesting season on Crab Bank ended Oct. 15, and Janet Thibault, a coastal bird biologist at the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, said she's "very jazzed" with the final results.

Species that nested on Crab Bank last year returned this year, and in overall greater numbers.

Gull-billed tern nests were the only ones to decrease, going from 192 in 2022 to 152 this year.

American oystercatchers increased from eight pairs to 14. Least tern nests went from 107 to 212, and black skimmer nests went

Please see CRAB BANK, Page A6



Crab Bank sits at the mouth of Shem Creek in Charleston Harbor. It was restored using dredged materials from the harbor-deepening project.

tfedor@postandcourier.com

MANNING — The S.C. Office of Inspector General's report into the Clarendon County School District "found no instances of fraud or misapplication of funds" by the district.

The office released its 20-page report Oct. 20 regarding concerns over the district's "potential financial irregularities," words used in Gov. Henry McMaster's April 10 letter calling on the SIG to investigate the district.

He gave Inspector General Brian Lamkin two binders of information and additional documents and electronic records brought in by state Rep. Fawn Pedalino, R-Clarendon.

Please see CLARENDON, Page A7

POLITICS In West Ashley, City Council contenders want more from City Hall

BY EVA HERSCOWITZ eherscowitz@postandcourier.com

On a hot October morning, Travis Richardson and his 6-yearold brother Nasir were playing basketball at Forest Park Playground, a parcel of courts and fields that first opened in 1970.

Richardson had ideas for sprucing it up.

"Better bleachers," he said between shots, pointing to the shallow stands "We don't need a bunch of glitz and glamor, like downtown. But we'd appreciate nicer, newer stuff."

Mauricio Velasquez, resident of West Ashley

some color out here."

More color could be coming. A \$70 million bond referendum on the Nov. 7 ballot could kickstart improvements to parks across the

one in West Ashley, where residents say they want greater investment in the area - from its parks to parking lots.

Richardson, who recently relocity of Charleston, including this cated from North Charleston, had a

wish list of renovations: better sidewalks, a park closer to his house and a local YMCA to take his brother in colder months. He joins a chorus of residents calling for more attention to West Ashley, where the first English colony south of Virginia took root, and some 80,000 people now live.

About 40 to 50 percent of the city's population resides west of

Please see WEST ASHLEY, Page A8

Inside

OPINION

Isle of Palms voters concerned about the balance between full-time residents and homes used as short-term rentals should vote "yes" on Nov. 7 to limit the number of short-term rental licenses on the island. See Page A10



SPORTS

Gamecocks hope Beamer follows Spurrier path. **B8**

LOCAL

Health care worker burnout at 'crisis levels,' says CDC. A4

E-PAPER

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Partly cloudy.	Busines
High 77. Low 63.	Comics.
Complete 5-day	Crosswo
forecast, A2	Horosco

oudy.	Business	B1
Low 63.	Comics	B4-5
te 5-day	Crosswords	B4, B7
A2	Horoscope	B5

beneath a hoop.

faded court.

"Give this thing a nice little wash,"

"Plant some flowers," he added,

examining the cropped grass. "Get

Richardson continued, eyeing the

Local A4	1
Obituaries A14	1
Sports B&	3
Television B3	

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30-YR T-BOND

4.93% -.08

CRUDE OIL

\$83.74 -1.75

INDUSTRY

DOW

33,141.38 +204.97

Battery storage firm planning \$30M campus

10-YR T-NOTE

4.82% -.03

BY DAVID WREN dwren@postandcourier.com

A South Korean company that provides storage for lithium-ion batteries plans to invest more than \$30 million in a manufacturing site at Camp Hall Commerce Park in Ridgeville.

NASDAQ

13,139.88 +121.55

BSS Global Inc. plans to buy 14.6 acres at the industrial property off Interstate 26 for \$4.23 million. State-owned electric utility Santee Cooper, which is marketing the Camp Hall site, approved the sale during its Oct. 23 board meeting. BSS plans to employ more than 80

workers as part of its expansion into BSS Global. He said the company Berkeley County.

S&P 500

4,247.68 +30.64

The real estate acquisition still needs approval from the S.C. Joint Bond Review Committee before it can be finalized.

The property, known as "Campus 7," is near a site where Nevadabased Redwood Materials plans to recycle lithium-ion batteries for the electric vehicle industry. Redwood's \$3.5 billion investment is the largest industrial announcement in South Carolina.

'It's a pretty nice thing to have out there," Dan Camp, Santee Cooper's vice president of real estate, said of Please see BATTERY, Page B2

EDUCATION

won't need any additional infrastructure, such as roads or water and sewer, beyond what the utility already has planned for the Camp Hall property.

A representative for BSS could not be reached for comment.

The company plans to build its factory in the northwest portion of the 4,000-acre Camp Hall property, where about one-third of the land has been set aside for industrial development. The bulk of the property, which is adjacent to the



GOLD

\$1,975.00 -1.30

EURO

\$1.0589 -.0086

Santee Cooper's Camp Hall Commerce Park is located off Interstate 26 in Ridgeville. A South Korean battery-storage firm plans to invest \$30 million and hire 80 workers at a site it plans to buy within the property.

HEALTH CARE

Forging ahead

American College of Building Arts' blacksmithing program to expand to King Street after \$2M deal



Trident's top exec leaving for new job

BY JOHN MCDERMOTT jmcdermott@postandcourier.com

The top executive for one of the Charleston region's biggest medical providers and largest employers is leaving after less than three years to take a job in California.

Christina Oh, president and CEO of Trident Health System, will be joining Sutter Health on Dec. 1, according to an Oct. 24 announcement.



A national search is underway to find her replacement, spokesman Rod Whiting said Tuesday. Her last day is Nov. 30. In the new role,

Oh

Oh will be the market president for the greater San

FILE/ROBERT BEHRE/STAFF

The American College of the Building Arts occupies a former trolley barn on Meeting Street in downtown Charleston.

BY JOHN MCDERMOTT jmcdermott@postandcourier.com

The American College of the Building Arts has hammered out a \$2 million deal to grow its blacksmithing program.

The school has purchased an existing 6,000-square-foot building on about a third of an acre on upper King Street to accommodate the expansion of the department that teaches students old-fashioned ironworking skills.

The goal is to have the property ready for classes by next August, according to Chad Urban, chief operating officer.

the wonderful tradition of Charleston ironwork," he said in an Oct. 24 written statement. Urban could not be reached for further comment Tuesday.

The acquisition of 1084 King St. was announced by the commercial real estate firm NAI Charleston, which represented the previous owner

The deal was finalized late last month, according to Charleston County land records. Novell Real Estate Group represented the American College of the Building Arts.

The new space for the blacksmithing program is about half a mile north of the Please see BUILDING ARTS, Page B2

"This program's expansion continues college's campus, which was relocated in 2016 to a 19th-century city-owned trolley barn at 649 Meeting St. after a \$3.5 million renovation project.

The future King Street outpost is south of Romney Street and across from the John L. Dart Library. It was constructed around 1974 and most recently housed a commercial graphics and printing business that has moved to West Ashley.

The seller was an out-of-state investment group that bought the property about two years ago for \$1.63 million.

Francisco area for Sutter, a large nonprofit based in Sacramento.

"At Trident, she expanded the system's acute and ambulatory footprint, built tertiary services and developed a 'people-first' culture among employees and physicians," according to her hiring announcement.

Oh, who started her career in coastal South Carolina and went to graduate school in Charleston, was a Tenet Healthcare veteran who joined Trident from Arizona in May 2021.

She has led a regional health-care system that operates acute-care hospitals with 445 patient beds - Trident Medical Center and Summerville Medical Center. Trident also has three freestanding emergency care sites, in Moncks Corner, North Charleston and Summerville.

It recently completed a \$30.4 million free-standing psychiatric hospital off U.S. Highway 78 in North Charleston, near the Trident Medical campus. Around the same time, Trident unveiled plans to build a \$278 million, 50-bed full-service hospital on Johns Island.

The system is part of HCA Healthcare, a publicly traded company based in Nashville.

Trident is among the largest employers in the Charleston region, with 2,600 workers and more than 500 physicians who treat about 375,000 patients each year.

Reach John McDermott at 843-937-5572 or follow him on X @byjohnmcdermott

TECHNOLOGY

SC among states suing Meta, says platforms harming kids

BY BARBARA ORTUTAY Associated Press

Dozens of states, including South Carolina, are suing Meta Platforms Inc. for harming young people's mental health and contributing to the youth mental health crisis by knowingly and deliberately designing features on Instagram and

Facebook that addict them to its states, bringing the total number of tial dangers of its social media platplatforms.

The lawsuit was filed by 33 states in U.S. District Court in California. It alleges that Meta routinely collects data on users under 13 without parental consent, in violation of federal law.

In addition, nine attorneys general are filing lawsuits in their respective

states taking action to 41 and Washington, D.C.

"Meta has harnessed powerful and unprecedented technologies to entice, engage, and ultimately ensnare youth and teens. Its motive is profit, and in seeking to maximize its financial gains, Meta has repeatedly misled the public about the substanforms," the complaint says. "It has concealed the ways in which these platforms exploit and manipulate its most vulnerable consumers: teenagers and children."

The suits seek financial damages and restitution and an end to Meta's practices that are in violation of the law.

"Kids and teenagers are suffering from record levels of poor mental health and social media companies like Meta are to blame," said New York Attorney General Letitia James in a statement. "Meta has profited from children's pain by intentionally designing its platforms with

BUSINESS

A full listing of stocks can be found at **postandcourier.com/e-paper**

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22 AnalogDev	164.93	+3.00	 37	Comcast	43.46	+4.66	6	Haverty	26.98		34	Microsoft MicroStr	330.53 424.87	+1.21 +47.38	6 71	RegionsFn RiotBlck	14.17 10.67	02 +1.00	 44	Uber Tc		44.19 379.11	+1.1 +6.0
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19 ATMOS	108.67	+.88	23 CC	DexCom	▼ 190.84 86.35	+.33	18	Intel	34.59		41	NewmntCp	38.45	+.01	19 43	SEI Inv Salesforce	54.51 204.22	18 +2.22			V-W-X-Y	-Z	
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28 BookingHl 39 BostonSci	2835.37 50.96	+15.83 +.83	34	Enphase	▼94.84	-1.45	25	KimbClk	120.50	-1.31	11	OtterTail	70.53	+.28	10	SouthState Spotify	64.60 170.63			WestRc	•	34.72	
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Briefcase

Earnings push stocks on Wall St. higher

NEW YORK — Wall Street rose to a rare gain Oct. 24 after Verizon, General Electric and other big companies reported fatter profits for the summer than expected.

The S&P 500 climbed 0.7 percent Tuesday to break a five-day losing streak. The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 0.6 percent, and the Nasdaq composite rose 0.9 percent.

SC among states suing Meta Platforms

META, from B1

manipulative features that make children addicted to their platforms while lowering their self-esteem."

In a statement, Meta said it shares "the attorneys general's commitment to providing teens with safe, positive experiences online, and have already introduced over 30 tools to support teens and their families."

"We're disappointed that instead of working productively with companies across the industry to create clear, age-appropriate standards for the many apps teens use, the attorneys general have chosen this path," the company added. South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson announced Oct. 24 his office was part of the 33-state complaint. The broad-ranging federal lawsuit is the result of an investigation led by a bipartisan coalition of law enforcement officials from California, Florida, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Jersey, Tennessee, and Vermont. It follows damning newspaper reports, first by The Wall Street Journal in the fall of 2021, based on the Meta's own research that found that the company knew about the harms Instagram can cause teenagers - especially teen girls — when it comes to mental health and body image issues. One internal study cited 13.5 percent of teen girls saying Instagram makes



consent, and many younger kids have social media accounts. The states' complaint says Meta knowingly violated this law, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, by collecting data on children without informing and getting permission from parents.

Other measures social platforms have taken to address concerns about children's mental health are also easily circumvented.

For instance, TikTok recently introduced a default 60-minute time limit for users under 18. But once the limit is reached, minors can simply enter a passcode to keep watching. TikTok, Snapchat and other social platforms that have also been blamed for contributing to the youth mental health crisis are not part of Tuesday's lawsuit. Washington D.C. Attorney General Brian Schwalb wouldn't comment on whether investigators are also looking at TikTok or Snapchat. For now they're focusing on the Meta empire of Facebook and Instagram, he said. 'They're the worst of the worst when it comes to using technology to addict teenagers to social media, all in the furtherance of putting profits over people," he said.

Verizon jumped after saying it increased its number of broadband subscribers by 20 percent and earned more than analysts expected during the summer. General Electric also rallied after delivering better-than-expected earnings and raising its profit forecast for the year. And Coca-Cola rose after it said growth in Mexico, India and other markets helped boost profits.

The pace is picking up for companies reporting their results for the summer, with more than 30 percent of the S&P 500 on the schedule this week.

UAW strikes at GM SUV plant in Texas

DETROIT — First it was Ford, then Stellantis.

Now a General Motors factory has been added to the growinglist of highly profitable plants where the United Auto Workers union is on strike.

About 5,000 workers on Oct. 24 walked out at GM's factory in Arlington, Texas, that makes big, high-margin SUVs such as the Chevrolet Tahoe and Cadillac Escalade.

The strikes in Texas, as well as at the largest Ford factory in the world in Louisville, Kentucky, and a Stellantis plant that makes lucrative Ram pickups in Michigan, are aimed at getting the companies to capitulate to union demands for richer wages and benefits than the automakers so far have offered.

Automakers said they won't stick themselves with costs that could make their vehicles more expensive than competitors.

Separately, GM's finance chief said the strike is expected to cut pretax earnings by \$800 million this year, and another \$200 million per week after that.



The Meta logo is seen at the Vivatech show in Paris, France. A group of 33 states, including California and New York, are suing Meta Platforms Inc. for harming young people's mental health and contributing the youth mental health crisis.

thoughts of suicide worse and 17 percent of teen girls saying it makes eating disorders worse.

Following the first reports, a consortium of news organizations, including The Associated Press, published their own findings based on leaked documents from whistleblower Frances Haugen, who has testified before Congress and a British parliamentary committee about what she found.

"Meta has been harming our children and teens, cultivating addiction to boost corporate profits," said California Attorney General Rob Bonta. "With today's lawsuit, we are drawing the line."

The use of social media among teens is nearly universal in the U.S. and many other parts of the world. Almost all teens ages 13 to 17 in the U.S. report using a social media platform, with about a third saying they use social media "almost constantly," according to the Pew Research Center.

To comply with federal regulation, social media companies ban kids under 13 from signing up to their platforms — but children have been shown to easily get around the bans, both with and without their parents'

The Post and Courier and Michael Casey, Michael Goldberg, Susan Haigh, Maysoon Khan and Ashraf Khalil of the AP contributed to this report.

Battery storage firm plans site

BATTERY, from B1

2,800-acre Volvo Cars campus, will be kept as natural areas with walking and biking trails.

The BSS plans show three buildings totaling about 127,000 square feet surrounded by parking areas and outdoor storage.

Camp Hall is marketed as a turnkey site with most of the permitting, roads, power, waterlines and other infrastructure already in place. In addition to BSS and Redwood, the business park has attracted large warehouses, a distribution center for consumer products firm Unilever Manufacturing and a computing data center. About 100 acres remain to be sold.

Palmetto Railways, a division of the S.C. Commerce Department, recently started construction of a \$185 million rail line that will link Camp Hall to a CSX Corp. hub in Cross.

The industrial park will also feature the 114-acre Avian Commons, which will include a park with a soccer field, a pavilion and a variety of stores to provide goods and services for workers. The locally based convenience store chain Refuel is the first retailer to announce plans for the commercial site.

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Blacksmithing program to expand at local college

BUILDING ARTS, from B1

On its website, the college traces its founding as the School of the Building Arts in 1999 to a report three decades earlier by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which warned that classically trained artisans were "rapidly aging out of the job market as the construction industry increasingly emphasized pre-fabrication and mass-production automation."

In 2004, the S.C. Commission on Higher Education approved two- and four-year tracks that combined a liberal arts curriculum and oldworld European-style building techniques in areas such as architectural carpentry,



JOHN MCDERMOTT/STAFF

The American College of the Building Arts recently paid \$2 million for an upper King Street commercial building (above) that will house its ironwork program.

blacksmithing, plastering and timber framing.

After the college took on its current name, it awarded its first degrees to seven graduates in 2009. Its board chairman is Pierre Manigault, who also is chairman of the company that owns and publishes The Post and Courier.

Reach John McDermott at 843-937-5572 or follow him on X @byjohnmcdermott

— Associated Press