



Photo by Judith Brown

**POTENTIAL DETOURS** — The CSX and Carolina Piedmont railroads have been announcing an upcoming closure of the railroad crossing at East Main Street, Laurens, effective Monday, Feb. 11. Ties are to be replaced as part of regular maintenance. Other railroad crossings in Laurens could also be impacted eventually as work continues throughout the city.

## — Utility —

(Continued from page 1)

which has lasted more than the few days originally planned because it needed to be relocated to the Historic Courthouse grounds.

"In the process they found an old water storage tank, between the courthouse and the Capitol Theater," Wood said. The 130-year-old concrete water tank appeared to have a domed top and wasn't on any of the CPW maps or records.

"CPW wasn't created until 1922, so it was put in back probably 40 years before we were here," said Wood. "The manhole was paved over so it had barely any water in it, but a guy dropped down in there to measure it."

City of Laurens Special Projects Director Tommy Burns had known the tank was there, Wood said, but the subject never came up until CPW crews found it as part of that routine hydrant replacement. Measurements taken his past week showed it to be about 20-by-20 foot,

and it would have held about 47,000 gallons of water. Wood said it's good information to document so crews in the future don't risk hitting it.

The discovery of underground materials were not welcomed, however, when gas line replacement crews on Fleming Street were held up after coming across parts of the foundation from a former Laurens Mill store or office. Located under the

parking lot

Across from Williams Barber Shop, the decades old building materials were in the path of the line-replacement that has been going on in the city since November.

"It will probably take a month longer than planned because of all the rain we've had," Wood said, "and finding parts of that foundation is why they're still on Fleming Street."

## — Trash —

(Continued from page 1)

point for county leaders, who decided to enter into a deal with Twin Chimney for \$17 per ton.

While the convenience stations will continue to operate as normal, private haulers will not be able to use the convenience sites to drop off large loads of refuse at those sites. They will have to take their loads to Twin Chimney or another landfill where they will be responsible for tipping fees, Satterfield said, adding that Greenville County has offered the same \$17 per ton price to private haulers from Laurens County.

Since the closing of the transfer station, private haulers dropping off loads of waste at the convenience sites has already caused early weekend closures.

"Our county ordinance says the sites are for day-to-day household trash," said Chris Gurga, Laurens County solid waste and recycling manager. "We sympathize with the private haulers, but we're not equipped to handle that."

Construction waste can continue to be delivered to the Curry Lake landfill in Gray Court.

County officials are looking into building its own transfer station, which would be centrally located in the county, Satterfield said.

"We are looking at all of our options, and one would be to construct a much smaller version of the one in Clinton," he said. "It was much larger than what we would need. It's early in the game, and we have to look at all of our options there and the cost. We will do what is most economical for the citizens of Laurens County."

## Hands-free bill headed to House floor

By John Clayton  
Editor

The South Carolina House of Representatives will be considering a bill that would up the price of not doing something is much more dear.

In 2018, there were 19,381 collisions resulting in 65 fatalities and 7,939 injuries that were attributed to distracted driving, according to the South Carolina Department of Public Safety. Laurens County was among the state leaders in traffic fatalities with 35 traffic-related deaths in 2018, according to statistics from the Laurens County Coroner's Office. Local law enforcement officials have said distracted driving is now the leading cause of traffic accidents in Laurens County and beyond.

"The number of crashes due to distracted driving is staggering, but we believe the statistics are actually higher," Wright said. "Law enforcement seldom codes a crash proven to be a direct result from distraction because it is too difficult to prove, and motorists aren't going to readily admit they were driving distracted behind the wheel."

The hands-free bill would increase to \$200 or more if

the law is passed. But law enforcement officials and proponents of the law say the price of not doing something is much more dear.

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The hands-free bill would prohibit drivers from han-

dling their phone and other electronic devices while driving. Law enforcement officers would be allowed to stop drivers for holding a phone and the bill would no longer require an accompanying charge, such as speeding or violation of seat belt laws.

Georgia has already passed a hands-free law, which went into effect July 1, 2018. According to AAA, 13 of 15 other states with similar laws saw at least a 16-percent decrease in traffic fatalities since the laws went into effect.

The South Carolina bill was introduced in December by Republican Rep. Bill Taylor of Aiken.

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