

— Arson —

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two witnesses described the three teenagers and investigators were able to track down the suspects from those descriptions.

“(Monday), we went out and started talking to people who were familiar with the area, and we got some names of people that matched the descriptions by the witnesses,” Brewington said.

Brewington said the 16-year-old was also connected with a case of vandalism at the Laurens City Park last year.



ASHES – Embers still smoldered Monday following a fire that destroyed an unoccupied house on Garlington Street Sunday. Three teens were arrested and charged with arson.

Photo courtesy of Brandon Elledge

— Courthouse —

(Continued from page 1)

“There’s been a lot of deferred maintenance that needs to be addressed,” Simmons said. “There was some careless remodeling and changes in the 1970s, in particular. Because of that, there’s not much left in terms of the history and character of the building.”

Caime asked council members to add the preservation of the courthouse to its short list of priorities, which also includes \$3.5 million for roof and HVAC fixes at the county offices and judicial complex at Hillcrest Square and a new EMS and 911 headquarters.

The efforts to find a space for a new EMS/911 headquarters have been at a standstill for several months, Caime said. He asked council members to maneuver some of those funds, which will come from county general funds until it is paid back through a general-obligation bond later this year, to include \$700,000 for Phase 1.

Phase 1 would be followed by an estimated \$4.4 million project that would include necessary elements such as HVAC, roof and plumbing issues in Phase 2.

Phase 3 is also estimated at around \$3.5-\$4.5 million and

would restore the building to its “historic glory” if approved by council.

“We’re inspired by what we have to work with here,” Simmons said.

Caime said restoring the historic integrity of the building is “the dream” scenario.

A tentative plan presented by Simmons suggested renovating the courthouse to more closely resemble the 1910-era building inside and out. The project would include windows mimicking those that outfitted the courthouse then and re-opening the ceilings inside the current council chambers.

All three phases of the entire project would be interconnected, pending approval and funding from the county, and take about two years to complete.

Caime “strongly urged” council members and all the administration to begin Phase 1 of the project. Council voted 5-2 to approve the proposal. Chairman David Pitts and Councilwoman Diane Anderson voted against it.

Pitts said he would rather see the entire project taken on at once, while Anderson said she had issues with funding it prior to issuance of the general obligation bond.

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Mega billions sit still unclaimed

By Nick Herman
Reporter

It’s been nearly four months since the largest lottery drawing ever was won in South Carolina, and nobody has come forward to claim the prize. The time to do so is starting to run out.

The winner, or winners, have until April 19 to claim the \$1.6 billion Mega Millions jackpot that was drawn on Oct. 23. One winning ticket was sold at the KC Mart No. 7 in Simpsonville. The winning numbers were 5, 28, 62, 65, 70, with the Megaball of 5.

“No one’s come forward,” said Julie Huffman, South Carolina Education Lottery Beneficiary Communications Coordinator.

“We’re just playing the waiting game.”

Huffman noted that typically lottery winnings are claimed “pretty quickly,” but the winner has nearly 180 days from the drawing to claim the prize. If the ticket is claimed before April 19, the state will get \$60 million in tax revenue if the winner chooses the one-time cash option. That money would go into the state’s general fund and could be used for any project.

If, however, the winning ticket is not claimed by April 19, the state will get \$11.2 million that goes into the state education lottery’s account as unclaimed prize money. The General Assembly would then determine what educational purposes - i.e., scholarships, equipment, etc. - the

money would be used on.

The rest of the money would be split up between the rest of the 46 jurisdictions that sell Mega Millions tickets. Mega Millions tickets are sold in 44 states (all but Alaska, Hawaii, Nevada, Utah, Mississippi and Alabama), the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

If the winner were to claim the annuity, they would get a check each year for 30 years, starting at \$24 million the first year and going all the way up to \$98 million for the last year.

The state lottery will announce when a winner has come forward if that happens, but according to state law any winner has the right to stay anonymous.

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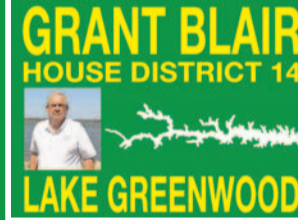
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