

By the Grace of God
AMERICAN



Kershaw THE NEWS-ERA

Smalls
inserts inside

Proudly Serving Lancaster and Kershaw Counties, and Town of Kershaw - Published in the Interest of the People of South Carolina

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North Central Middle School hold their Miss and Mr. Patriot Pageant



Congratulations to our winners of the Miss and Mr. Patriot 2026 pageant at North Central Middle School. Photo: (L-R) Bre-Ajsia Chunn - Miss Stars & Stripes; Natalie Thompson - Miss 6th Grade; Arianna Carey - Miss 7th Grade; Kinlee Clark - Miss Patriot 2026; Clayton Anderson - Mr. Patriot 2026; Ja'marion Clarkson - Mr. Patriot 1st Runner-up; Bella LeGrande - Miss Patriot 1st Runner-up; Payton Seckinger - Miss 8th Grade

Week Four: Legislative Update

Supporting our Small Businesses, Protecting Life, and Giving Parents the Tools They Need To Protect Their Kids.

Last week, we continued advancing conservative priorities focused on supporting small businesses, protecting life, and giving parents the tools they need to protect their kids. From tax relief for job creators to strong action on public safety and accountability, House Republicans delivered meaningful progress for South Carolina families.



Cody Mitchell

Supporting Small Businesses & Job Creators

Small businesses are the backbone of South Carolina's economy, and last week House Republicans took important steps to help them grow and succeed.

The Ways and Means Committee passed legislation to cut taxes and reduce burdens on small businesses. Small businesses make up more than 99% of all businesses in South Carolina and employ over 42% of our state's workforce. This legislation exempts the first \$10,000 of small business assets, saving employers time and money on paperwork, cutting costly red tape, and ending a burdensome tax on investments. These reforms help boost local job growth and keep South Carolina competitive.

Protecting Children & Strengthening Public Safety

Last week, legislation increasing penalties for the sexual exploitation of minors advanced in the House Judiciary Subcommittee. This bill strengthens criminal penalties to ensure punishment fits the severity of these crimes and makes clear that "mistake of age" is not a defense for creating or distributing exploitative material. South Carolina will not tolerate the exploitation of children.

The Judiciary Subcommittee also advanced legislation aimed at protecting children online by addressing the growing mental health and safety risks posed by addictive social media platforms. The bill requires reasonable age verification, parental consent, and increased transparency, giving families more control over how and when minors access social media. These commonsense protections

Cody Mitchell Update continued on page 2

Change in County Animal Control Enforcement

Effective Monday, February 2, 2026, primary enforcement of the Lancaster County animal control ordinance, Chapter 6--Animals and Fowl of the Lancaster County Code of Ordinances, shifted from the Lancaster County Sheriff's Office to commissioned animal control code enforcement officers employed by the County of Lancaster. Currently, the county employs three animal control officers who work under the direction of the manager of the Lancaster County Animal Shelter.

The animal control officers work daytime shifts during the week, and an animal control officer is on call at night and on weekends and holidays. A citizen needing to report an issue concerning an animal should call Lancaster County Public Safety Communications. For emergencies, dial 911. For non-emergencies, dial 803-283-4136. A county animal control officer will be dispatched to address the situation. The animal control officers have authority to issue citations for violations of the county animal control ordinance as appropriate based upon the facts of the incident and the terms of the ordinance.

Animal Control continued on page 2

AJ VS NORTH CENTRAL BOYS BASKETBALL



AJ #2 Damias Seegars goes up to the basket for The Volunteers.....AJ BOYS WIN 69-57 (photo by Gwynn Leaird)

Lancaster County School District Continues Superintendent Search

On the agenda at the Called Board Meeting for February 10 at 6:30 pm, the school board was discussing SCSBA Superintendent Search Survey Results and in the Executive Session would be discussing employment matters related to the search for the superintendent. Upon coming out of session, they would take

any necessary actions.

At press time, which is before the meeting, there was no further information to report.

Currently, Dr. Norris Williams is the Lancaster County Schools Interim Superintendent. Dr. Williams was Deputy Superintendent and was

named Interim Superintendent in January, 2026. Back in October, when Dr. Raashad Fitzpatrick announced his move to Cherokee County as their superintendent, it was also announced that it would take 4-8 months to go through the search process.