

Cody Mitchell Update
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protecting South Carolina's roadside market tradition and cutting unnecessary red tape on local farmers. This bill removes burdening regulations, supports family-run operations, and makes it easier for farmers to sell fresh, South Carolina-grown products directly to consumers, keeping our agricultural heritage strong and local businesses thriving.

Putting South Carolina First

The House passed H.3477, modernizing South Carolina's unemployment system by tying the length of benefits to the state's unemployment rate, shortening benefits when jobs are plentiful and extending them during tougher economic times. The bill also reinforces job-search requirements and strengthens oversight to prevent fraud. This reform protects taxpayers and ensures unemployment benefits remain temporary support while individuals actively seek work.

Additionally, the House Labor, Commerce, and Industry Committee advanced the American Iron and Steel Act (H.4709). This bill prioritizes American-made iron and steel in public projects, ensuring taxpayer dollars support domestic manufacturing and protect American jobs. We are putting America first right here in South Carolina!

The House also passed S.383, recognizing the Prothonotary Warbler as part of South Carolina's rich natural heritage. This bill reflects pride in our state's unique wildlife and natural beauty, a reminder that putting South Carolina first also means celebrating what makes our state special.

Responsible Budget Discussions Continue

The full Ways & Means Committee unanimously advanced the \$15 billion state budget on Thursday, delivering a strong, conservative plan focused on growth, infrastructure, and tax relief. This balanced proposal raises starting teacher pay, provides a 2% pay increase for state employees, expands school choice through additional funding for the Education Scholarship Trust Fund, and delivers approximately \$1 billion in tax relief, including income and property tax relief for families and seniors. The budget also makes major investments in roads, rural infrastructure, higher education, and workforce development to keep South Carolina competitive and prepared for continued growth. Full House debate is expected to begin March 9. As always, I appreciate the opportunity to represent you and to keep you informed about the work being done in Columbia. I welcome your feedback and encourage you to reach out if you have any questions or would like more information on these or other issues before the General Assembly.

To keep up with my legislative updates:

Facebook Link: <https://www.facebook.com/ElectCodyTMitchell>
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Burned Churches
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Church-burning was not only an act of war, it was an assault on belief, identity and community life. Understanding these events provides deeper insight into the civilian and military experience during the Revolution. The Revolution in the backcountry was essentially a civil war, as neighbors, friends and family members chose to side with the British or rebel against the Crown.

Bill Segars will present the program. He works with the SC 250 state Commission and was instrumental in the passage of the law for a Revolutionary War vehicle license plate that says "where the Revolutionary War was won." These plates have been available from the SC Department of Transportation as an optional plate design, but will now be the new standard state plate.

Born and living in Darlington County all his life, his family's land has been in his family since 1820 and was once occupied by Union troops in 1865. This background instilled a love and appreciation of history in him at an early age. He chose a career in building construction after receiving a degree in Civil Engineering and has combined his interest in history and his knowledge of buildings into historical restoration. He has restored many buildings that are presently listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 2003 he began a quest to find 185 old church buildings in South Carolina that were built prior to the Civil War. Over the last 21 plus years he has found over 900 old church buildings, all 46 county courthouse buildings and hundreds of beautiful old houses and public buildings in the state. In 2016 he co-authored a pictorial book featuring the 13 churches in South Carolina that were burned during the American Revolution.

Along with photographing and researching these buildings and sites from a builder's point of view, Bill's main objective with these projects is to share their locations so others can visit and enjoy them.

The venue, the Cultural Arts Center, was formerly the Lancasterville Presbyterian Church, finished in 1862. It was the first brick church built in Lancaster County. The interior has been beautifully restored with stained glass windows, some nearly twenty feet tall, a balcony on three sides and an amazing arch in the former pulpit area.

The Lancaster County Society for Historical Preservation preserved the old church and now operates the site as the Cultural Arts Center with the purpose of promoting visual and performing arts and educational programs.

For more information, email lancastersc250@gmail.com or visit the Lancaster County page of the South Carolina 250 website <https://southcarolina250.com/county/lancaster>. The program is a part of the Lancaster 250th American Revolution Anniversary Committee's "Engagement Series" and paid for by a grant from the South Carolina 250 Commission.

Town of Kershaw - Actions from 2/16/26 Council meeting

Actions Taken During Open Session

Approved Marion Street Sewer project (task order # 8) to be paid from the current sewer repairs & maintenance budget. Approved using water/sewer surplus funds in LGIP water/sewer account to cover Fire Hydrant Study & Capital Improvement Plan (task order # 6) and the Lynches River Waterline Bore project (task order #7). Motion made by M. Dorman, seconded by H. Truesdale, passed unanimously 6-0.

Approved an amendment to a previous motion regarding the replacement of a pump at the wastewater treatment plant, to have this project paid from funds in the LGIP water/sewer account. Motion made by M. Dorman, seconded by H. Truesdale, passed unanimously 6-0.

Approved repairs to the sewer pump at the Kershaw Correctional Institution, to be paid from funds in the LGIP water/sewer account. Motion made by M. Dorman, seconded by H. Truesdale, passed unanimously 6-0.

Actions Taken After Executive Session (1)

Approved contractual agreement with Smoak Construction LLC for Marion Street Waterline Project.

Background Info:

LGIP stands for Local Government Investment Pool, a program administered by the State Treasurer's Office. Many local governments use LGIP to invest their fund balances or surplus funds, as the interest rates are better than those offered by commercial banks. The town has several accounts with LGIP, one of which is used to invest surplus or fund balances from the town's Water & Sewer Fund.

Bill cutting property taxes advances

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Passing only a property tax or income tax cut without adjusting other aspects of the law could send the tower tumbling.

"That, folks, is what our tax code looks like right now," Bennett said of his metaphorical teetering Jenga tower.

In the end, however, none of those proposed changes passed. Senators kept the bill limited to only property taxes for older South Carolinians, with the promise of discussing further tax changes later this year.

A committee, with Bennett as the chair, will look at more sweeping changes to the state's tax policy, said Senate Majority Leader Shane Massey.

"That will be part of the conversation they consider," the Edgefield Republican told reporters. "Who do we want South Carolina to be in 20 years? And then what kind of tax policy do we need to do now in order to make that happen?"

Small business taxes
Other tax cuts could be on the horizon. As the Senate debated the property tax cut, the House unanimously advanced a bill that would give small businesses tax breaks on their equipment.

Any business with fewer than 100 employees or that brings in less than \$10 million annually would not have to pay property taxes on equipment valued at less than \$10,000.

That would mean a small mom-and-pop shop would no longer have to pay annual taxes on their computers or furniture, for example, said Rep. Brandon Newton, the bill's sponsor.

Small businesses will probably buy new, better furniture and upgrade their computers more frequently if they don't have to annually pay taxes on their depreciating value, Newton said. That will in turn mean more money going into local economies, he added.

"All of us, we know the mantra of, 'Small businesses are the backbone of our economy,'" the Lancaster Republican said. "We hear that, but this is a great way to show that."

Under the law as is, small businesses have to total up the value of all of their property, no matter how small, said Rep. John McCravy. For a staff of only a few people, that can be unnecessarily time-consuming and pricey, he said.

"This is an onerous tax," the Greenwood Republican said.

As legislators consider such sweeping cuts to taxes, though, some wondered how the state will make up hundreds of millions of dollars in lost revenue.

Southern Evangelical Seminary launches Steadfast Women Speaker Forum

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Southern Evangelical Seminary (SES, www.ses.edu) announces the launch of its new Steadfast Women Speaker Forum, a one-day gathering designed to inspire and encourage women to stand for truth, deepen their faith, and live out biblical conviction with confidence in today's culture.

WHO: Southern Evangelical Seminary

WHAT: Steadfast Women Speaker Forum

WHEN: Thursday, March 5, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET

WHERE: The Club at Longview, 8801 Longview Club Drive, Waxhaw, NC 28173

The event features keynote speaker Jackie Green, co-founder of the Museum of the Bible and wife of Steve Green, president of Hobby Lobby, appearing alongside her daughter, Lauren Green McAfee. Together, they will share a powerful message on faith and legacy inspired by their book, "Only One Life: How a Woman's Everyday Shapes an Eternal Legacy."

Additional speakers include Christina Lee, Michele Marsili, and Jodi Jackson Tucker, making the forum a compelling gathering of influential women shaping faith, culture and leadership.

To learn more about Southern Evangelical Seminary's Steadfast Women Speaker Forum, or to purchase tickets, click here. To learn about sponsorship opportunities, please contact djordan@ses.edu.

Southern Evangelical Seminary (SES, www.ses.edu) was established in 1992 to cultivate a strong level of discipleship needed to address the problems in a post-Christian culture and to strengthen the church well into the 21st century.

The mission of SES is to train men and women, based on the inerrant and infallible written Word of God, for the evangelization of the world and the defense of the historic Christian faith. SES offers a range of undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees (along with several for-credit certificates and micro-credentials)

"Is there any fear that the sheer volume of property taxes and personal taxes that we're taking out of the system will be a significant shock to not only municipalities but to other local governments and, as far as it goes, to state government?" asked House Assistant Minority Leader Roger Kirby, D-Lake City.

The cut for small businesses was comparatively small, Newton replied. The cuts will cost the state an estimated \$1.7 million and local governments about \$9 million, according to the state's economic analysts.

The overall package will become a larger discussion when the House actually takes up the property tax bill, Newton said.

that uniquely integrate theology, philosophy, and apologetics to build a complete and systematic Christian worldview.

SES's new Truth That Matters (TTM) training center is bridging the gaps between the current needs of individual Christian believers, churches, and organizations and the best available resources in apologetics, evangelism, and discipleship. Led by Dr. Stephen Cutchins, Truth That Matters aims to profoundly impact the Kingdom of God as an

extension of the rich legacy and exciting vision of SES. The TTM center offers resources, training and networking opportunities to churches, leaders, families and other non-profit organizations committed to standing "Steadfast in the Truth." To learn more about TTM, go to Truth That Matters.

For more information on SES, visit its website at www.ses.edu or its Facebook page, or follow the SES Twitter feed, @sesapologetics.

Leading with Heart: Dr. Jason Ramey Earns State's Top Counseling Administrator Award



Dr. Jason Ramey, Principal of Van Wyck Elementary School named Administrator of the Year by the South Carolina Counseling Association at the annual conference today. Dr. Ramey has been in education since 2000 and in our district since 2019. He has served as principal of Van Wyck Elementary since 2021. The Lancaster County School District is grateful for Dr. Ramey's daily leadership in his building and amongst his colleagues.

The award recognizes an administrator who impacts the counseling and helping profession. Dr. Ramey exhibits servant leadership collaborating with colleagues in his building. The counseling conference focus is "Rooted in Reflection" which is exhibited in his reflective practice in utilizing data to drive instruction.

Dr. Norris Williams, Interim Superintendent shared, "Congratulations to Dr. Jason Ramey, Principal of Van Wyck Elementary School, on being named Administrator of the Year by the South Carolina Counseling Association! Dr. Ramey is a strong champion of the vital services our school counselors provide, always supporting their work to meet the needs of students and families. His dedication to student well-being and commitment to creating a caring, supportive school community make this recognition so well deserved."

For more information visit <https://www.sccounselor.org/nominations-awards>.

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