

Lawsuit questions Garrett's residency

Francie Kleckley takes legal action against incumbent state senator

By RENEE ORTIZ
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Senate District 10 candidate Francie Kleckley named incumbent candidate Billy Garrett and the South Carolina Election Commission in a lawsuit

claiming election fraud. Kleckley claims Garrett cannot and should not be running for the state Senate seat he currently holds because he does not live in Senate District 10. The lawsuit was filed Oct. 6. Garrett confirmed by phone Tuesday that the lawsuit was served to him that morning in Lexington. "The South Carolina Constitution requires that senators live in the district they represent," Kathleen McDaniel, Kleckley's attorney, wrote in an email.

"This is because a Senator should know the people she represents and understand their particular concerns. The law should apply the same to everyone. ... Billy Garrett has behaved



BILLY GARRETT



FRANCIE KLECKLEY

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PHOTOS BY RENEE ORTIZ | INDEX-JOURNAL

Greenwood resident John Patterson, 66, was killed when a tree fell through his home on Maxwell Avenue as Hurricane Helene arrived in the county. This was the only confirmed storm-related death.

'Recovery stage'

Officials: State of emergency over in Greenwood County

By RENEE ORTIZ
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It's been two weeks since Hurricane Helene ripped through Greenwood County. The destruction was so widespread, officials declared a state of emergency for the area.

John Patterson, a Greenwood resident, was killed when a tree fell through his home. This was the only confirmed storm-related death in Greenwood County.

Full press conference

You can watch the full conference here: <https://shorturl.at/flr9K>

County and City of Greenwood officials had a joint press conference Thursday morning to provide storm updates to residents.

"The devastation was cataclysmic and devastating. I'm happy to announce that the emergency phase of our work has been completed and we are no longer operating under a state of emergency. Now we move into the recovery stage," said County Council Chairman Chuck Moates.



Two weeks after Helene tore through the county, Greenwood City and County officials declared an end to the state of emergency at a press conference at the Greenwood Library. Officials will now move forward with recovery and restoration efforts.

normal daily operations.

"Thanks to the dedication of our teams and the resilience of Greenwood County, 99 percent of power has been restored across the county, and road clearing

has progressed well, with major routes now fully accessible," Oliver said.

The National Guard and chainsaw teams were reported to have cleared over 150 roadblocks and 50 miles of roads across the county.

Oliver said 11 businesses and 315 residential units have reported damage from Helene. The total damage assessment is still underway.

Since Sept. 27, more than 30,000 meals and 60,000 bottles of water have been distributed to residents.

Moates said about 12,000 residents have already applied for assistance from FEMA. Two locations will be set up next week to provide in-person assistance with FEMA applications. People can also apply online at disasterassistance.gov or over the phone at 1-800-621-FEMA.

Oliver warned residents to be wary of online scams with assistance.

Contact the Emergency Op-

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Dozens of leaders at SC agencies, colleges get raises as high as \$64K

By SKYLAR LAIRD
SC Daily Gazette

COLUMBIA — Nearly 40 state agency directors and public college presidents in South Carolina received raises Tuesday totaling more than \$720,000.

The raises are part of an effort to bring all state agency leaders in line with what other states are paying based on a salary study conducted by a consultant based in Charlotte.

The pay hikes of \$9,000 to \$64,000 fall in the middle of the ranges the study recommended, said House Speaker Murrell Smith, a Sumter Republican who leads the Agency Head Salary Commission.

That included a \$39,300 raise for Department of Commerce Director Harry Lightsey, making him the highest-paid agency head in the state, with an annual salary of \$301,392. He was previously the fifth highest-paid.

He was the only member of the governor's Cabinet on the list up for approvals, meaning Gov. Henry McMaster recommended increasing his salary. McMaster pointed to booms in economic development in the past two years, including billions of dollars in investment coming into the state under Lightsey's leadership.

"Secretary Lightsey has done an outstanding job, setting record after record," McMaster wrote in his letter of recommendation to Smith.

The governing board of each college or agency recommended the rest of the 39 raises the 11-person commission approved Tuesday.

Along with looking at the ranges proposed in the salary study, commission members considered how long it had been since each person had received a raise, how long the director had been in that position, and their job performance, Smith said.

The commission did not publicly offer specific explanations for other increases.

A look at the raises

College of Charleston President Andrew Hsu received the biggest total raise, with his state-paid salary increasing about \$64,000, from \$256,483 to \$320,500. Hsu, who took the college's helm five

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SKYLAR LAIRD | SC DAILY GAZETTE

From left, Senate President Thomas Alexander, R-Walhalla; Senate Finance Chairman Harvey Peeler, R-Gaffney; House Speaker Murrell Smith, R-Sumter; House Ways and Means Chairman Bruce Bannister, R-Greenville; and Rep. Leon Howard, D-Columbia, talk Aug. 8 during an Agency Head Salary Commission meeting.

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