

IndexJournal

INDEXJOURNAL.COM SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 1919 VOL. 107, NO. 45

2 SECTIONS, 16 PAGES FRIDAY, MAY 2, 2025 DAILY \$2

From loan to lawsuit

Aiken man: Calhoun Falls mayor took \$4,500 and disappeared

By Renee Ortiz
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What started as an interest-free loan meant to open a new grocery store in Calhoun Falls, has turned into a cautionary tale about trust.

Rick Lind, a 65-year-old retired business owner living in Aiken said in January 2023, he loaned \$4,500 to Calhoun Falls Mayor Terrico Holland.



RICK LIND



TERRICO HOLLAND

Lind said the loan came after Holland pitched a plan to revitalize the local economy with a small grocery store. Lind said Holland spoke passionately about improving access to groceries in a town where its one grocery store had closed.

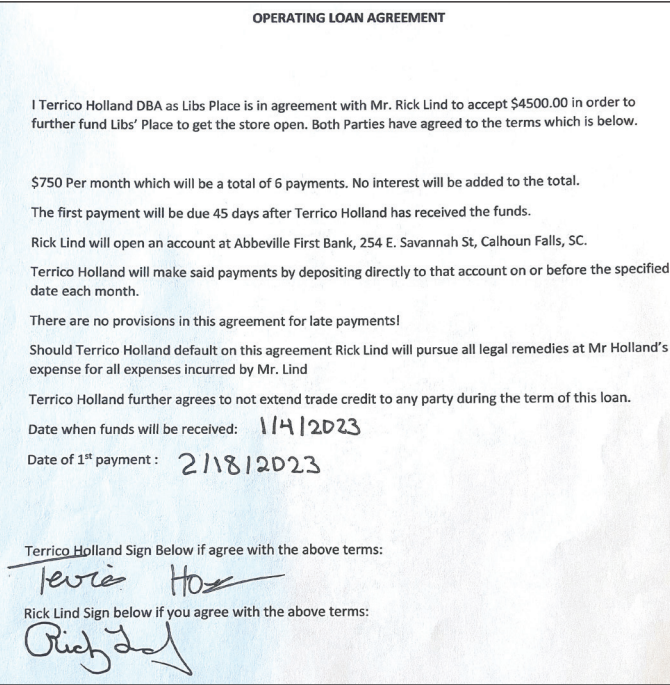
“He said he was trying to make Calhoun Falls a better place,” Lind recalled. “He showed me the building, told me what he needed for inventory, and it sounded like a sincere effort.”

Lind agreed to help, and the two signed a written loan agreement. Lind provided the agreement to the Index-Journal.

Under the terms, Holland, operating under the name “Libs Place,” agreed to repay the \$4,500 in six monthly installments of \$750. Payments back to Lind would begin 45 days after Holland received the funds on Jan. 4, 2023.

Payments were to be deposited directly into a designated account Lind opened at Abbeville First Bank. The agreement included no provisions for late payments and specified that Lind could pursue legal remedies at Holland’s expense

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SUBMITTED

In January 2023, an Aiken man, Rick Lind and Calhoun Falls Mayor Terrico Holland, signed a loan agreement for \$4,500. Holland approached Lind asking for money to fund a grocery store. The money was never used to open a grocery store, nor was it returned.



SUBMITTED

Edgewood Middle School students show off a garden they planted in partnership with a University of South Carolina STEM research initiative studying the impact of project-based learning in rural areas.

Edgewood sixth graders dig into real world learning

By Mya Atten
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With shovels in hand and curiosity in full bloom, sixth graders at Edgewood Middle School turned a classroom discussion into a full-scale project: building a community garden.

The idea took root after Hurricane Helene in fall 2024, when students began asking what would happen if another storm shut down stores.

How would people get food?
That question quickly grew into action.
“A community garden was definitely something that they were interested in, and we thought would help them answer that question,” Keeli Figueroa, sixth grade social studies teacher, said.

The garden project is part of a partnership with the University of South Carolina through a STEM research initiative focused on the impact of project-based learning, particularly in rural areas.

The approach blends academic content with real-world problem solving to deepen student engagement.

“I think project-based learning is so important, because it does help all learning types,” Figueroa said.
“When you’re doing an activity, when you’re doing

See PLANTING, page 8A



SUBMITTED

After Hurricane Helene, sixth graders from Edgewood Middle School in Ninety Six visited local high school level agricultural programs and planted a community garden at the school to answer the question: What would happen if another storm shut down local stores?

GGUM celebrates 30 years with new, improved facilities

By St. Claire Donaghy
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People living in Greenwood County facing eviction, hunger and lack of employment have an improved crisis ministry location to get assistance.

Greater Greenwood United Ministry recently unveiled its new building location for crisis ministry services at 1409 Edgefield St., across the road from its free medical clinic, at 1404 Edgefield St., which is also being renovated.

Tours of the crisis ministry building and free medical clinic were given Tuesday, following a



ST. CLAIRE DONAGHY | INDEX-JOURNAL

Rosemary C. Bell, Greater Greenwood United Ministry executive director, holds the door for open house attendees who toured Greater Greenwood United Ministry’s newly opened crisis services location.

brief ceremony and ribbon cutting, marking the nonprofit GGUM’s 30th anniversary.

Since its beginnings Jan. 30, 1995

in the basement of South Main Baptist Church to now, GGUM has helped people in need. Today, 67 churches partner with the ministry. Donations and fundraising are a large part of how the ministry finances its outreach.

Toby Frost, senior pastor at South Main Baptist Church, opened the ceremony with prayer saying that Greater Greenwood United Ministry is “a place where needs are met.”

Patrick Griswold, pastor of Rehobeth Baptist Church in Plum Branch and vice chairperson for the GGUM board of directors said “volunteers make this place go” and said “God moves in incredible

ways” within the ministry.
Rosemary C. Bell, GGUM executive director, said crisis help is what started the ministry.

Now, with more, dedicated space for those services in the new building, people can be served more effectively, Bell said.

“It feels like we’ve stepped into the latest century,” Bell said, noting the crisis ministry building was donated to the ministry. Previously, it housed a garage and an upholstery business. “Crisis services were formerly in our medical clinic building.”

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LAKELANDS WEATHER

Today

Storm chance
High: 84
Low: 62
Chance of precipitation:
30%

Saturday

Rain, storms
High: 83
Low: 57
Chance of precipitation:
60%

Sunday

Rain chance
High: 76
Low: 50
Chance of precipitation:
30%

Monday

Sunny
High: 76
Low: 50
Chance of precipitation:
0%

Tuesday

Sunny
High: 76
Low: 52
Chance of precipitation:
0%

Wednesday

Sunny
High: 78
Low: 53
Chance of precipitation:
0%

Lake levels (in feet)

Clarks Hill: 329.87
+/- full pool: -0.13
Greenwood: 439.02
+/- full pool: -0.98

Hartwell: 660.41
+/- full pool: 0.41
Keowee: 98.77
+/- full pool: -1.23

Marion: 75.94
+/- full pool: -0.86
Murray: 358.32
+/- full pool: -1.68

Russell: 475.09
+/- full pool: 0.09
Wateree: 96.94
+/- full pool: n/a



SCREENSHOT

A Facebook page that looks to be operated by Holland, “GrindDoe Rico Holland” listed a grand opening for Lib’s Place on February 26, 2024. Posts show show meats and produce for sale at at 529 East Savannah Street, formally known as the Red Barn. On April 16, 2024, another post was sent out on the page announcing the closing of the store.

LAWSUIT

From page 1A

if he defaulted. But shortly after receiving the check, Lind said Holland stopped answering calls and texts, eventually blocking his number.

“The second I gave him a check, he started playing hide and go seek with me,” Lind said.

A Facebook page that looks to be operated by Holland, “GrindDoe Rico Holland” listed a grand opening for Lib’s Place on February 26, 2024. These posts show show various meats and produce for sale at 529 East Savannah St., formally known as the Red Barn.

Abbeville County property records show the building is listed as a commercial property and is owned by Darren Ashley, a 59-year-old Calhoun Falls resident.

Ashley confirmed in an interview with the Index-Journal that Holland has rented the property from him for several years. Ashley said he was excited to hear a store could be coming back to the town.

“I rent it to him super, super cheap, he just has to pay the taxes on it,” Ashley explained. “I did it so the town would have a produce stand,” Ashley said.

Ashley says Holland has all his equipment at the location, but opening the store has been easier said than done.

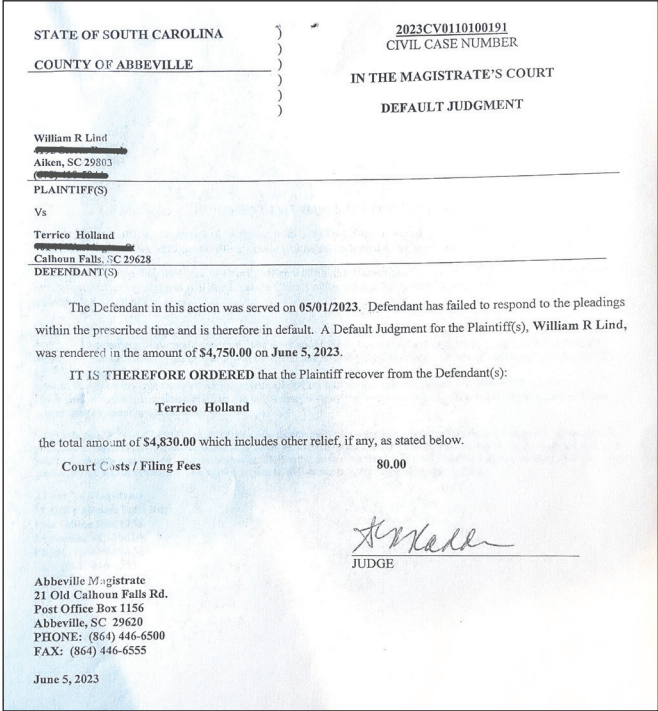
“He’s opened the store once or twice and closed it right back down,” Ashley said.

On April 16, 2024, a new post appeared on the above-mentioned Facebook page stating: “Wow Lib’s Place Have Been Shut Down For Now!! DHEC Came Back And Said They Have Had Over 40 Calls About The Store!! We Are Currently Shut Down!! Sorry For The Inconvenience!!” the post reads.

The Index-Journal reached out to the page owner via Facebook Messenger and phone to learn the current status of the shop; no one responded.

A request was made to the town of Calhoun Falls for documentation of a former/current business license issued to Holland for Lib’s Place. As of publication, no records or response have been provided.

Lind’s partner, a former Calhoun Falls business owner, described her early support for Holland’s plans. She said residents were eager for a new grocery store after the closure



SUBMITTED

A default judgment in Rick Lind’s favor was recorded in December for \$4,830. Court records show Holland failed to appear in court.

of their only market.

But according to her and Lind, the project never materialized. Holland continued to delay repayment, offering excuses, before going silent. “He took my money and ran,” Lind said.

Lind filed a civil lawsuit against Holland in June 2023. Lind provided those court documents to the Index Journal.

A default judgment in Lind’s favor was recorded in December for \$4,830. Court records show Holland failed to appear in court. Despite the ruling, Lind said he has yet to receive any repayment.

“I talked to the sheriff. ... He told me Holland has no assets in his name,” Lind said.

That sheriff, identified by Lind as Abbeville County Sheriff Ray Watson, reportedly confirmed Holland had no assets to seize that could be legally claimed to settle the judgment. This has left Lind without his money and the town with no grocery store.

Holland is also named in a pending breach of contract lawsuit filed in February 2025, by the City of Abbeville. That case lists both Holland and Town Clerk Wendi Lewis as defendants.

The breach of contract lawsuit filed by the City of Abbeville against the Town of Calhoun Falls (Case No. 2025CP0100036) pertains to a dispute over water bills. The two municipalities have entered into mediation to resolve the issue.

While the specific contract details are not publicly disclosed, the nature of the lawsuit and the mediation process suggest the dispute centers on a water service

agreement between the two towns. The City of Abbeville alleges that the Town of Calhoun Falls failed to fulfill its payment obligations under this agreement, leading to the breach of contract claim.

The Index-Journal reported on the independent forensic audit of the Town of Calhoun Falls issued this month by CRI Advisors, LLC on behalf of the South Carolina Office of the State Auditor.

The report found extensive financial mismanagement, including a lack of oversight, unapproved credit card purchases and undocumented reimbursements made under Holland’s administration.

The report raised questions about missing records and accountability within town operations, prompting concern among residents and state officials.

Upon reading the audit, Lind said the findings only reinforced his experience.

“When I saw the report, I thought, ‘Where do I sign up to testify?’” Lind said. “If he was willing to take advantage of me, a private citizen, I can only imagine what he’s done with taxpayer money.”

For Lind, the experience has left lasting disappointment.

“You just don’t steal from people,” he said. “You don’t take advantage of people’s kindness. I tried to give someone a chance to do something good for their community. Instead, I got used.”

The Index-Journal reached out to Holland for comment; he did not respond.

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GGUM

From page 1A

The GGUM medical clinic, which opened in January 1997, provides primary care for hundreds of people unable to afford health insurance who do not qualify for Medicaid or Medicare. The clinic space, a former pediatric medical office, is also being renovated, thanks to a nurse who volunteers at the clinic who also has a background in construction, Viktoria Carlyle.

Carlyle was not able to be interviewed because of travel but Suzy Harvley, an office assistant at the medical clinic, said renovations there have greatly opened up cramped spaces.

“We now have room for the doctors, nurses and volunteers, which include

Greater Greenwood United Ministry: 30 years

- Greater Greenwood United Ministry is a nonprofit:
- It provides a crisis ministry for Greenwood County residents, offering help with rental eviction, utility disconnection, food insecurity, financial counseling and more.
 - It also provides a free medical clinic for eligible patients in Greenwood, McCormick and Saluda counties, offering no-cost primary care, internal medicine, a women’s clinic, pharmacy and more. Services are for those unable to afford health insurance who do not qualify for Medicaid or Medicare.
 - Visit: greenwoodunitedministry.org or call 864-942-0500.

people who are lab technicians and translators, who are with us on Thursday nights from 5 to 7 p.m. to see patients,” Harvley said. Forty-five volunteers and five paid staff people are involved with the ministry. “It’s all God’s plan,” Bell said.

Dr. Matthew T. Logan, president and chief executive officer of Self Regional Healthcare, was one of many community leaders in attendance at the ceremony.

“Greater Greenwood United Ministry really helps us get people plugged into the health care system,” Logan told the Index-Journal. “It’s a collective effort for the Greenwood community with Self Regional partnering with Greater Greenwood United Ministry and Community Initiative’s Clinica Gratis.”

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Dr. Julius Leary, gynecologist and a longtime volunteer with Greater Greenwood United Ministry’s women’s clinic, talks with Ginger Lawton, who volunteers as a laboratory technician with the free medical clinic, before Tuesday’s ribbon cutting and open house for the ministry’s new crisis services building. In the background, ministers Toby Frost and Patrick Griswold talk.

PLANTING

From page 1A

a lab, and you’re doing the research yourself, it’s easier to understand, and its relatable. This isn’t just an issue your teacher puts on the board and you have to find and answer it. They’re solving real problems in the community, and that makes them invested.”

Throughout the year, students explored where food comes from and how to grow it across all four core subjects, science, math, social studies and ELA.

Their learning didn’t stop in the classroom.

Students visited the South Carolina Governor’s School for Agriculture at John de la Howe to explore career paths in the field and see agriculture in action.

They also toured Ninety Six High School’s agriculture program, including its greenhouse and irrigation systems.

Back at Edgewood, students grew crops like cucumbers, tomatoes, carrots, radishes, lettuce and onions.

“We started planting two months ago, germinating the seeds,” Figueroa said.



SUBMITTED

Edgewood Middle School staff and volunteers spent the year helping sixth graders explore where food comes from and how to grow it by using problem-based learning across all four core subjects: science, math, social studies and ELA. From left are Keeli Figueroa, sixth grade social studies teacher; Christine Lowery, Master Gardener; Lisa Malone, guidance counselor and Michael Gresham, English language arts teacher.

“We wanted to make sure that they could grow something that would produce food or a crop before the school year was over.”

The students celebrated their harvest with a ribbon cutting ceremony April 29.

They also plan to celebrate their hard work with a salad party, using the vegetables they’ve grown themselves.

Figueroa said she’s proud of what her students have accomplished.

“They really wanted to make an impact for themselves and for the community, and I cannot wait to see how big it grows within the next couple of years,” Figueroa said. “This is just the first step in something bigger for the community.”

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