



LAKELANDS WEATHER

Today




Sunny  
High: 72  
Low: 45  
Chance of precipitation: 0%

Saturday




Sunny  
High: 75  
Low: 49  
Chance of precipitation: 0%

Sunday




Sunny  
High: 80  
Low: 60  
Chance of precipitation: 0%

Monday




Sunny  
High: 79  
Low: 48  
Chance of precipitation: 0%

Tuesday



Sunny  
High: 66  
Low: 43  
Chance of precipitation: 0%

Wednesday



Sunny  
High: 65  
Low: 44  
Chance of precipitation: 0%

Lake levels (in feet)

Clarks Hill: 329.65  
+/- full pool: -0.35  
Greenwood: 439.03  
+/- full pool: -0.97

Hartwell: 659.07  
+/- full pool: -0.93  
Keowee: 98.16  
+/- full pool: -1.84

Marion: 75.80  
+/- full pool: -1.00  
Murray: 357.70  
+/- full pool: -2.30

Russell: 474.42  
+/- full pool: -0.58  
Wateree: 97.14  
+/- full pool: n/a

RAISES

From page 1A

years ago, also received the largest hike by percent, with a nearly 25% boost in his base pay.

The next highest was \$41,000 for Fred Carter, president of Francis Marion University since 1999. His salary rises to \$307,286.

Lander University President Richard Cosentino, who's led the Greenwood college since 2015, received a \$31,381 boost, upping his state-paid salary to \$279,442.

The raises put them fourth, fifth and sixth in terms of the state-paid salaries of presidents of South Carolina's four-year universities. The top-paid presidents are at the state's research institutions — Medical University of South Carolina, University of South Carolina, and Clemson University — who also each receive substantially more from their foundations and other non-state sources.

The presidents of 12 of South Carolina's 16 technical colleges, as well as the oversight agency for the two-year schools, also received raises Tuesday.

Some directors received high raises proportional to what they were making before, even if they were not among the largest in dollar figures.

For instance, Jolene Madison, head of the School for the Deaf and the Blind, got a \$29,800 increase, which was about a 23% increase to her \$130,000 salary.

Scott Phillips, head of the Forestry Commission, got a nearly 20% raise, bringing his pay up to \$168,000. Constance Holloway, who oversees the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, saw her pay rise more than 17%, from \$179,150 to \$210,000.

The raises legislators approved Tuesday were part of a larger effort to make sure pay for agency leaders stays competitive with other states. In August, the commission approved pay bumps for seven others, amounting to about \$300,000.

The commission rejected raises for directors of the Department of Consumer Affairs and the State Museum.

The panel offered no explanation for rejecting the requested increase for Consumer Affairs' leader.

As for State Museum Director Amy Bartow-Melia, she's already making more than the recommended amount for her position, so legislators felt she was already sufficiently paid, said Sen. Greg Hembree, R-North Myrtle Beach.

New First Steps director

Ann Vandervliet will make \$159,064 as the next director of First Steps, which acts as both a state agency and a nonprofit to provide services and pre-kindergarten programs that prepare children for school.

The commission approved her salary Tuesday.

Vandervliet comes from running an early childhood nonprofit in Greensboro, North Carolina, called Guilford County Partnership for Children.

Before that, she ran a program in Virginia that connected public and private leaders to bring services to young children. She has a degree in international studies from the University of South Carolina, according to an agency news release.

Vandervliet will start work Oct. 17, according to the agency.

"I am truly honored to have this opportunity to work alongside families and communities to ensure that every child has the chance to reach their full potential," Vandervliet said in a news release.

She replaces Georgia Mjartan, whose June 30 resignation was announced in May.

Mjartan had been director of First Steps and the Early Childhood Advisory Council since 2017. Mark Barnes, First Steps' director of administration, has been filling in as interim director while the agency looked for a permanent successor.

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Republican Party to meet Monday at the Y

From staff reports

The Greenwood County Republican Party will meet at 6 p.m.

Monday in the conference room at the YMCA, 1760 Calhoun Road.

Speakers are Cathy Miller, candidate for Greenwood County

Council District 4; school board and CPW Commissioner candidates. Trump signs will be available for purchase (\$3) to benefit

the county party.

For information, find us on Facebook or call Jean Griffin at 864-923-1245.

LAWSUIT

From page 1A

like the rules don't apply to him. Now, a court will decide," McDaniel wrote.

McDaniel said the goal of the suit is to remove Garrett from the ballot. She said Kleckley is paying for the investigation and lawsuit out of her personal funds, not campaign finance funds.

"Remove Billy Garrett from the ballot because he lives in McCormick, and he does not meet the residency requirement to run to represent Greenwood, Lexington, and Saluda Counties in the state senate," McDaniel wrote in an email.

State law requires a candidate for political office be a resident of the district he or she is seeking to represent, according to Article III, § 7; S.C. Code Ann. § 7-11-15(A)(2).

Garrett first ran for the seat in 2020, and he is the Republican incumbent for this year's race.

When he ran in 2020, he was listed as a resident in McCormick County. The lawsuit states that at the time, he and wife Denise owned property at 155 Bereau Drive in McCormick. The couple bought the property in 2018.

Garrett listed the McCormick home as his permanent residence in his 2020 Statement of Intention of Candidacy.

In December 2021, the state Legislature voted to approve the redistricting of Senate District 10, which then excluded McCormick County.

The new district includes Greenwood County, and the northern part of Saluda and part of Lexington counties.

The state Senate approved House and Senate map proposals in a 43-1 vote on Dec. 7, 2021, and the House approved the new districts in a 75-27 vote on Dec. 9, 2021. Gov. Henry McMaster signed the bill redrawing the boundaries of Senate District 10 into law on Dec. 10, 2021.

Legislative voting records show that Garrett voted in favor of the redistricting.

Other than to acknowledge he

had been served Kleckley's suit, Garrett did not respond to other questions related to the suit asked by the Index-Journal.

He was given several opportunities to reply since Tuesday morning until Wednesday afternoon.

Late Wednesday afternoon, Reagan Chase Kelley, senior vice president of policy and campaigns with Surge Public Affairs, a political consulting and public relations company, responded on behalf of Garrett. He repeated Garrett's initial response Tuesday to this newspaper after being served the lawsuit.

"This is now a legal matter, one in which is intended to distract Senator Garrett's campaign from reaching voters and taking about the present-and-clear issues that contrast between Senator Garrett's record and his opposition. Therefore, I would respectfully reference you back to (Garrett's) statement below:

"Radical liberals like my opponent love talking about 'threats to democracy,' yet she is the one filing a lawsuit to take away the rights of voters. She is doing so because her radical, leftist ideology is not shared by the residents of Greenwood, Lexington, and Saluda Counties. I live in Senate 10, period, and my opponent knows that.

"While she may choose to waste her campaign time and resources filing silly lawsuits, I'm focused on helping my constituents heal from the damage of Hurricane Helene and sharing my proven and effective record of getting things done for the people District 10."

The current map for Senate District 10 is the map in effect for the 2024 Senate District 10 election. Garrett's property in McCormick is now part of Senate District 25.

According to the lawsuit, on Aug. 30, 2023, Garrett's wife bought a house at 129 Ashley Hills Drive in Lexington.

Garrett did not respond to questions about the purpose of the residence, or whether the Lexington home is his primary residence.

The lawsuit states that on March 12, Garrett changed his voter registration from Mc-

Cormick County to Lexington County using that property address. On March 22, Garrett filed his Statement of Intention of Candidacy, but listed his address "The Garrett Law Firm, P.C." at 109 Oak Ave. in Greenwood.

Tax information included in the lawsuit shows the property in Lexington has an assessment tax ratio of 6%, which is applied to second homes and vacation homes in the state. Garrett's residence in McCormick County is listed at a 4% tax rate, which is the rate for a primary residence.

According to the state Department of Revenue, for property tax purposes, legal residence represents the permanent home or dwelling place owned and occupied by the owner.

It is described as "the home where a person intends to remain permanently for an indefinite time. A home may be determined a legal residence, even though the person may be temporarily living at another location."

Legal residence does not include homes maintained for recreational or vacation purposes.

"To qualify for the special 4% property tax assessment ratio, the owner of the property must have actually owned and occupied the residence as his legal residence and been occupying that address for some period during the applicable tax year. Only an owner-occupant is eligible to apply for the 4% special assessment," the homepage of the Department of Revenue property tax reads.

Garrett answered none of this newspaper's questions about the tax ratios of the McCormick and Lexington homes in accordance with state law.

Kleckley's lawsuit alleges since Garrett's McCormick home is no longer in Senate District 10, and his residence in Lexington does not qualify as a permanent residence, he is ineligible to run for Senate District 10.

"There has not been a residency change. According to public records, Billy Garrett has lived in McCormick County, SC since 2018. Billy Garrett's attempt to make a house that his

wife bought in Lexington into his residence is a sham he created to run for reelection in Senate District 10," McDaniel said.

Garrett also did not answer the paper's request to clarify where his legal permanent address is.

When asked about the affect the lawsuit could have for the open seat, McDaniel wrote:

"That is a question of legal that the court will have to answer. There is a process by which the party could hold a new primary to nominate a different candidate and then there would be a special election for this seat after the general election. SC Code Section Section 7-11-55. But we think that the Republican Party should have been able to see through Garrett's attempt at changing residence and never allowed him to be on the ballot in the first place, in which case we think Francie should run unopposed," McDaniel said.

McDaniel confirmed Kleckley's team is moving forward with the lawsuit.

"The Republican Party has let us know that they are going to ask the court to let them be a part of the lawsuit as well, and we expect they will file a motion to intervene shortly," McDaniel said.

The South Carolina Republican Party confirmed it is working with the court.

Chairman Drew McKissick provided a statement on behalf of the state Republican Party:

"This is nothing more than a liberal Democrat trying to get some free publicity by making bogus claims that have already been proven to be false. Billy Garrett lives in Senate District 10, and he'll be re-elected in November because he's a conservative and he represents a conservative district that wants nothing to do with a liberal Democrat."

John Catalano, public information officer, said the state Election Commission does not comment on ongoing legal matters.

Contact Renee Ortiz at 864-943-5643. Follow her on X at: [IJReneeOrtiz](#)

FRIDAY'S PUZZLE ANSWERS

DAILY CROSSWORD

P	O	M		C	U	R	B		C	H	A	T	
A	D	O		A	N	I	L		L	O	L	A	
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A	L	M	S			T	O	Y	S		R	E	T

JUMBLE

Jumbles: RISKY PERCH HYMNAL PAPAYA  
Caption: When they realized mosquitoes were inside their tent, they weren't — BNA:

HAPPY

CAMPERS

CELEBRITY CIPHER

Previous Solution: "I think we learn the most from imperfect relationships — things like forgiveness and compassion." — Andrea Thompson