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DAILY \$2

Going too far

Man accused of pepper spraying people at “No Kings” protest arrested

By Renee Ortiz

rortiz@indexjournal.com and Faith Morrow, special to the Index-Journal

Protesters gathered in Greenwood on March 28 as part of a nationwide “No Kings” movement, bringing together residents of all ages to voice concerns over rising costs, government leadership and civil rights.

More than 150 people attended the local demonstration.

Organizers said the event was intended to be peaceful and community-focused, with an emphasis on voter registration and connecting residents with advocacy resources.

“This is an opportunity to come together, meet like-minded people and identify next steps,” said Cynthia Halpin Brown, a local organizer with the 50501 movement.

Brown said the group is part of a broader national effort, with events held across multiple states under a shared message of civic engagement and political accountability.

Organizers with the 50501 movement and Indivisible reported the protests were part of a broader national effort, with demonstrations held across all 50 states.

The two groups estimated more than 8 million people participated in over 3,300 events nationwide, as well as additional protests in Europe.

Brown described the event as an opportunity to engage with others and express concerns about issues ranging from the cost of living to broader political divisions.

“We want to make sure people know they’re not alone,” Brown said.

Brown said the name “No Kings” is symbolic, referencing concerns about leadership and decision-making rather than a literal



PHOTOS BY RENEE ORTIZ | INDEX-JOURNAL

Several attendees interviewed at the “No Kings” event by the Index-Journal were later among those affected when pepper spray was deployed by a man driving by.

monarchy.

“We know we don’t have a king,” Brown said. “But we have someone who is acting like one.”

Brown said the phrase reflects concerns about leaders making decisions without accountability, rather than a claim about the country’s form of government.

The event was organized as a nonpartisan, peaceful protest, with safety marshals on site and communication with the Greenwood Police Department ahead of the gathering.

“We do have safety marshals out here,” Brown said. “No weapons are allowed.”

Armed with cardboard signs, protesters voiced concerns over

a range of issues, including the release of the Epstein files, the ongoing conflict involving Israel and Iran, tariffs, immigration enforcement, federal spending cuts and access to healthcare.

Among those present were college students from Lander University and other local institutions.

“It’s hard to stay silent,” said Dante Santangelo, a Lander University student. “I just feel like I should at least try to do something, try to make a change.”

Santangelo said he has seen the trajectory of the county within the last two years and said he feels it’s

See **PROTEST**, page 5A



A protester holds a sign reading “Free U.S. from tyranny, resist, vote” during the “No Kings” protest in Greenwood.

Greenwood City sets hearing process ahead of Uptown Grill case



INDEX-JOURNAL | FILE

In the wake of two shooting incidents, Uptown Grill’s business license has been suspended.

By Renee Ortiz
rortiz@indexjournal.com

Greenwood City Council moved quickly Monday to establish formal procedures ahead of a planned hearing tied to Uptown Grill, where a fatal shooting earlier this month is now prompting potential action on the business’s license.

Council member Jonathan Bass was not in attendance, council members Matthew Miller and Robert Dean called into the meeting.

During a special called meeting March 30, council unanimously approved a set of rules governing how business license suspensions and revo-

cations are handled, just days before a scheduled April 6 hearing involving the Seaboard Avenue establishment.

The vote comes in the wake of a March 22 shooting at Uptown Grill that left 41-year-old Knowledge Kwame Shakur dead, according to the Greenwood County Coroner’s Office. This is the second incident that has happened at the restaurant.

“The business license has been suspended, and what we did was just set the rules for the the mandatory appeal of that decision,” said Mayor Brandon Smith.

City Manager Julie Wilkie confirmed the newly adopted procedures outline how hearings will be conducted,

including how evidence is presented, how witnesses are sworn in and how decisions are made.

“This is standard,” Smith said, noting the guidelines are based on recommendations from the Municipal Association of South Carolina and used by other municipalities.

Councilmember comments during the meeting clarified that the rules apply to a range of scenarios, including license denials, suspensions and full revocations, often tied to issues such as public safety concerns, nuisance complaints or misrepresentation by a business.

“This would fall in the same lines as

See **CITY**, page 6A

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PHOTOS BY RENEE ORTIZ | INDEX-JOURNAL

Protesters gather along Main Street in Greenwood during a "No Kings" demonstration, holding signs and engaging passing traffic.

PROTEST

From page 1A

crucial to make the younger voices heard.

"I want to be able to afford a home. I want to be able to have kids," Santangelo said. "The way it's going, it just doesn't look like I can."

Lander student, Nathan Buchanan said the protest was about showing support and speaking out. "There's a reason why people are getting upset," Buchanan said.

Gavin Carroll, another student, said he was motivated by concerns about the direction of the country.

"I'm disturbed by what's happening, and I want to help," Carroll said.

Santangelo stressed that the issues brought up at the protest are not central to a political party.

"I have neighbors back home that are scared to go outside because of ICE. Go check on your neighbors and see how this affects everybody. This doesn't just affect people you don't like. It affects you, affects your friends, affects your family," Santangelo said.

Several attendees interviewed at the event were later among those affected when pepper spray was deployed, including Carroll.

Man attacks protesters

The demonstration was disrupted when a man drove past the crowd and sprayed protesters.

According to a Greenwood Police Department incident report, officers were dispatched to the area of Court Avenue East and Main Street around 2:55 p.m. in reference to a report of a man deploying pepper spray towards the crowd.

Witnesses told police the man reached across his vehicle and sprayed individuals from a Dodge pickup truck as he drove past the protest.

Multiple protesters reported burning skin, burning eyes and respiratory irritation as a result of the exposure. Emergency medi-



Protesters gather along a roadway in Greenwood during a local "No Kings" demonstration, holding signs addressing a range of issues. The event drew more than 150 attendees, according to organizers.

cal services were requested to the scene.

According to emergency dispatch records, callers reported that multiple people had been sprayed in the eyes and mouth, with some experiencing immediate burning and irritation.

The incident report stated that victims included a 25-year-old man, an 81-year-old man, a 67-year-old woman and a 60-year-old woman. Their names were redacted in the report, but victims expressed a desire to pursue charges.

Shortly after the incident, the Index-Journal contacted Greenwood Police Chief TJ Chaudoin, who said officers had identified a suspect and were actively searching for him.

"The subject will face numerous charges," Chaudoin said Saturday. "People have the right to peacefully protest without interference and this type of behavior will not be tolerated."

Chaudoin said the following day that warrants were being signed in

the case.

Police later identified the suspect as Joe Keith Jensen, 68, of 108 Sproles Avenue in Greenwood, using witness statements, vehicle information and city camera systems.

Jensen was taken into custody March 29, according to jail records, and charged with multiple counts of assault and assault and battery in the third degree.

911 caller describes moment of attack

Colleen Tebo, a Greenwood resident of 44 years, called 911 after she and others in her group were sprayed by Jensen. The Index-Journal obtained the full 911 call through a Freedom of Information request.

COLLEEN TEBO

"I thought we'd have some guys screaming at us, flipping us off, you know, the usual trucks gassing at us or whatever," Tebo said. "But not

this, not this nut."

Tebo said the driver pulled alongside her group before reaching across the vehicle and spraying directly toward them.

"The look on his face, was like he was evil," Tebo said. "He looked like he was pointing a gun."

Tebo said the incident left her shaken.

"This was scary to me," Tebo said. "Usually, something like that, I maybe could brush off, but in the times we have today, you can't. It's a different world."

Despite the incident, Tebo said she does not plan to stop attending protests.

"I'm still going to do it," Tebo said. "I just really want to know, if there's going to be anything in the future, more preventative measures at these things... because there's a lot of older people there that this could have been very bad if it would have hit them."

Officials respond to protest incident

Greenwood officials said the incident was unacceptable and emphasized residents' right to safely express their views.

Chaudoin confirmed the substance used in the incident was pepper spray and said a total of six victims were identified, each resulting in a separate charge.

"He's charged under the state code of assault and battery in the third degree, a misdemeanor offense, which carries 30 days or \$1087 on each count," Chaudoin said.

Arrest warrants obtained by the Index-Journal state the suspect "knowingly and willfully" used pepper spray against multiple victims.

"People have the right to peacefully protest without interference and this type of behavior will not be tolerated," Chaudoin said.

Chaudoin said the victims were treated at the scene by emergency medical services and that no serious injuries were reported. He

described the incident as a random act, saying investigators do not believe the suspect was actively seeking out individuals to attack.

"We believe that he was probably driving through the area, seen it, and then, for whatever reason, decided to throw the pepper spray out," Chaudoin said.

Chaudoin added that this was the group's largest protest yet. The department had not experienced issues at previous "No Kings" protests in the City and that organizers had consistently followed guidelines.

"This is the first time we've ever had an incident at any of our protests," he said. "We knew the people that were organizing it. They were very understanding, understood what they could and couldn't do. They were very upfront, informative with us, and basically did everything that they were supposed to be able to do."

Mayor Brandon Smith also called the incident unacceptable, while noting that not all residents may agree with the protest itself.

"They have a right to be out there and express their opinions peacefully," Smith said. "It's never acceptable for violence in any form."

Smith said he believes the incident was not part of a broader pattern, but rather an isolated act.

"You can't control every single person's emotions in response to things," Smith said. "But it's not something we tolerate. There are a lot of people that don't agree with the protest, but I don't know that people protesting in general is hurting anybody."

Regardless of political affiliation, Smith said violence is never allowed.

"Everybody has the right to their to express themselves. That's fundamental to our form of government," Smith said.

Contact Renee Ortiz at 864-943-5643. Follow her on X: @By_ReneeOrtiz

TUESDAY'S PUZZLES FOR THOSE WHO MISSED THEM

Daily Crossword WESLEY COMMONS

brought to you by Rehabilitation



- ACROSS**
- 1 Part of speech (Abbr.)
 - 4 Ocean liner
 - 8 Waistcoat
 - 12 Mauna —
 - 13 Fork prong
 - 14 Chancellor — von Bismarck
 - 15 Long — of the law
 - 16 Skeletal part
 - 17 "Curb — Enthusiasm" Effect
 - 18 Effect
 - 20 Narrow space
 - 22 Curved path
 - 23 Embrace
 - 24 Thespians
 - 27 Brown pigment
 - 31 Annoys
 - 32 Succulent plant
 - 34 Naval rank (Abbr.)
 - 35 "We're off to — the wizard ..."
 - 36 Bed size

- 37 Spotted rodent of South America
 - 38 "—, I'm Adam"
 - 40 Disconnect
 - 42 Gull
 - 44 — anemone
 - 45 Alpaca relative
 - 48 Be unsteady
 - 51 Adam's grandson
 - 52 Jazz type, for short
 - 54 — Jima
 - 55 Measure of land
 - 56 Grotto
 - 57 — culpa
 - 58 Touch down
 - 59 Get wind of
 - 60 "To — is human ..."
- DOWN**
- 1 Jai —
 - 2 Student housing, for short

Answer to Previous Puzzle

P	P	L	E	B	O	O	M	S	R	S
A	K	I	N	A	N	N	A	L	I	T
C	L	A	D	D	O	U	R	O	D	E
T	A	M	I	N	G	S	T	O	O	G
V	E	E	I	M	P	E	L			
A	S	K	E	W	P	O	N	E		
C	U	E	A	L	L	I	N	T	H	E
E	N	G	U	L	F	E	D	A	I	M
P	E	T	A	J	A	M	E	S		
B	A	C	O	N	S	A	M			
O	R	A	N	G	E	T	W	I	T	C
L	I	D	T	R	A	Y	D	O	L	E
T	E	D	H	I	L	L	S	P	A	R
S	L	Y	Y	E	T	I	T	I	M	E

- 3 Crammed (Hyph.)
- 4 Plaster for exterior walls
- 5 Sword handle
- 6 Hotel
- 7 Fuzzy fruit
- 8 Journey
- 9 English school
- 10 Shock
- 11 Whig's opponent
- 19 — and crafts
- 21 Trick
- 24 Length x width
- 25 Uncooked
- 26 Slipped
- 28 Post-war period
- 29 Short distance
- 30 — rule
- 31 Ideology (Suffix)
- 33 United
- 36 Agents (Hyph.)
- 37 Actor — Newman
- 39 Diverted
- 41 Wall Street worker
- 43 Observe
- 45 Meat for stew
- 46 Ancient Peruvian
- 47 Maize
- 48 — bean
- 49 Fancy pitcher
- 50 Bellow
- 53 Actress Issa —

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
12			13				14					
15			16				17					
18			19			20	21					
		22				23						
		24				25	26		27	28	29	30
31			32			33			34			
35			36						37			
38			39			40			41			
			42			43			44			
45	46	47				48				49	50	
51						52	53			54		
55						56				57		
58						59				60		

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Tuesday to Sunday.

3		9	8	5	2			4	
2		1	6					5	
		8	5		1	7		2	6
		3				9			
9	2			6				3	7
				2				4	
6	4		3	7		1	9		
5					6	4		3	
7			4	9	8	5		2	

Answer to puzzle

2	9	5	8	6	4	3	7	1	8
3	8	7	4	9	2	6	5	1	3
8	6	1	9	5	7	3	2	4	8
6	9	3	8	7	2	5	1	4	9
4	9	4	7	2	8	6	5	1	3
3	7	1	8	5	9	6	4	2	8
1	5	2	6	4	9	7	3	8	1
9	2	3	7	1	4	8	5	6	9
5	8	6	4	3	9	1	7	2	8
4	7	1	4	8	5	2	7	1	4

CELEBRITY CIPHER

by Luis Campos

Celebrity Cipher cryptograms are created from quotations by famous people, past and present. Each letter in the cipher stands for another.

" X E X M I D N E X A J X S B D T Z B R L R L X
 T U X H G A C R B E X V G X T R B N D , ' Z L C R B Y
 ' O ' L C U U X D X P ? ' R L C R ' T L N Z I N G
 T R C M R . " — R N W H A C D H I

Previous Solution: "You can't get there by bus, only by hard work and risk and by not quite knowing what you're doing." — Alan Alda

TODAY'S CLUE: 9 sjenbø S

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Pamela Pattie

Pamela Sheffield Pattie, 77, of Greenwood, South Carolina, passed away peacefully on March 28, 2026, at Lowcountry Hospice House in Summerville, South Carolina.

Born April 3, 1948, in Jacksonville, Florida, Pamela was the daughter of the late Warren and Estelle Sheffield. A proud native Floridian, she graduated from Port Charlotte High School in 1966. Following graduation, she began her career in title insurance working alongside her father at Chicago Title Agency in Fort Lauderdale. She later continued her professional journey with Turnberry Associates in Miami until her retirement.

Pamela and her husband, Ronald, eventually relocated to Greenwood, South Carolina, where they fulfilled their dream of enjoying a quieter, simpler life together.

She was a devoted wife, a loving mother, and a cherished grandmother and great-grandmother. Pamela found her greatest joy in time spent with her family—especially her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, who were truly the center of her world. She had a passion for travel and treasured the many memories created along the way. She also loved boating and fishing, embracing every opportunity to be near the water.

Pamela is survived by her four daughters: Patricia B. Gutierrez and her husband, Orlando, of Orlando, Florida; Rana Bentley and her husband, Kevin, of Olathe, Kansas; Michelle Serger and her husband, Hakan, of Cary, North Carolina; and Kimberly Pattie of Fort Lauderdale, Florida. She is also survived by her loving brother, Warren T. "Tom" Sheffield Jr. and his wife, Elise, of Diamondhead, Mississippi.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her sister, Donna Locker, and her husband, Warren, of Port Charlotte, Florida.

Pamela will be remembered for her warmth, strength, and unwavering love for her family. Her legacy lives in the hearts of all who knew and loved her.

In lieu of flowers, the family request donations be made to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital.

Blyth Funeral Home & Cremation Services is assisting the family.

Berriman O. 'Berm' Bagwell

Berriman O. "Berm" Bagwell, 71, of Greenwood, passed away on March 21, 2026. He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and friend who will be deeply missed by all who knew him. Berm shared 36 wonderful years of marriage with his beloved wife, Julie Pratt Bagwell. The couple married on March 17, 1990, and had just celebrated their anniversary days before his passing. Together, they built a life centered on love, family, and lasting memories. He is survived by his son, Doug Bagwell, and his seven cherished grandchildren: Jason, Zayne, Leon, Preston, Rose, Violet, and Julian, who were the pride and joy of his life. Berm also leaves behind his mother, Ernestine Bagwell; one sister, Robbi Bagwell of Brownwood, Texas; two brothers, Derek Bagwell of Hickory Tavern, South Carolina, and Bryant Bagwell (Leith) of Simpsonville, South Carolina; as well as sisters-in-law Robin Scott of Waterloo, South Carolina, and Toni Armstrong of Ninety Six, South Carolina. He is also remembered fondly by numerous nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his father, Robert Douglas Bagwell.

Berm proudly served his country in the United States Army as an Infantryman from 1974 to 1977. Following his military service, he worked for 15 years at Walmart Distribution Center, retiring in 2013. Berm found his greatest happiness in spending time with his grandchildren. He also enjoyed fishing and hunting, and was a passionate fan of Clemson football and Washington Redskins football. A memorial service will be held on Saturday, April 11, 2026, at 1:00 PM at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Ninety Six. Family and friends are warmly invited to attend and celebrate Berm's life. Berm will be remembered for his love of family, his dedication, and the many lives he touched throughout his journey. In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to the family to help with recent expenses. Berriman O. "Berm" Bagwell

He also enjoyed fishing and hunting, and was a passionate fan of Clemson football and Washington Redskins football. A memorial service will be held on Saturday, April 11, 2026, at 1:00 PM at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Ninety Six. Family and friends are warmly invited to attend and celebrate Berm's life. Berm will be remembered for his love of family, his dedication, and the many lives he touched throughout his journey. In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to the family to help with recent expenses. Berriman O. "Berm" Bagwell

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For more news, visit indexjournal.com/obituaries

GREENWOOD COUNTY

- Berriman O. "Berm" Bagwell, Greenwood.
- Dale Edgar Staley, Greenwood.

MCCORMICK COUNTY

- Patricia Willis, McCormick.

VISITATIONS TODAY

- WELTON, Cora, 1-6, Robinson & Son Mortuary.

OBITUARY GUIDELINES

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Dale Edgar Staley

Dale Edgar Staley, 93, resident of Wesley Commons, husband of Mary Ann Allan Staley, passed away Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at Hospice & Palliative Care of the Piedmont.

Born December 30, 1932, in Wilkesboro, North Carolina, he was a son of the late James Thornton Staley and Ruth Neideffer Staley.

Mr. Staley was a proud veteran of the United States Marine Corps, serving during the Korean Conflict. He was stationed at Marine Corps Headquarters in Washington, D.C., served with the USMC Honor Guard, and was a member of the Silent Drill Team. He was a graduate of the University of North Carolina and also attended MIT. He worked with Parke-Davis and enjoyed the outdoors. He was an avid University of North Carolina basketball and football fan. He was a member of St. Mark United Methodist Church and the Fellowship Sunday School Class.

Surviving in addition to his wife, Ann Allan Staley, are one son, James Thornton Staley of Simpsonville; two daughters, Pamela Annette Morse of Durham, North Carolina, and Melissa Ruth Holland (Curtis) of Bessemer City; one grandson, Devin Alexander Holland; and one sister, Joyce Hartsell of Belmont, North Carolina.

He was predeceased by one sister, Edith Elizabeth Staley Yates.

A memorial service will be held at 3 p.m. on Monday, April 6, 2026, at Wesley Commons, with Rev. Jason Wilson and Rev. Kelvin Hinson officiating. The family will receive friends from 2-3 PM prior to the service at Wesley Commons.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to St. Mark United Methodist Church, 550 Highway 72 Bypass NW, Greenwood, SC 29649.

Blyth Funeral Home & Cremation is assisting the family.

Patricia Willis

Patricia Willis (69) was born on December 4, 1956, in McCormick, SC. She transitioned from labor to reward on Tuesday, March 31, 2026, in Greenwood, SC. Bostick-Tompkins Funeral Home located at 6300 Highway 28 South, McCormick, SC is in charge of the funeral arrangements.

Trent steps into state education role

By Mya Atten
matten@indexjournal.com

State education decisions don't stop in Columbia. They move through the South Carolina Department of Education and into classrooms, shaping what students learn and how schools operate.

For David Trent, that reality shapes his new role into more than a title. It's a



DAVID TRENT

responsibility. The Greenwood native has been appointed to the South Carolina Board of Education, where he will represent the Eighth Judicial Circuit. The board oversees key areas including teacher certification, curriculum and textbook review and statewide education policy.

A 1998 graduate of Emerald High School, Trent attended The Citadel, the South Carolina Bankers School and the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy.

Trent's experience in education includes two terms on the Greenwood County School District 50 Board of Trustees from 2016 to 2024, including serving as chairperson from 2018 to 2020.

The move to the state level, Trent said, came after encouragement from others and a growing interest in how decisions made beyond the local level shape outcomes in the classroom.

"I feel like having a little bit more of a well-rounded board is helpful in making decisions, particularly in this space," Trent said.

That perspective is shaped by Trent's work outside of education. Through his experience in business, Trent said he has seen firsthand what employers expect and where gaps remain.

"I believe we still have many of our students that are not prepared to enter the workforce with the basic skills they need to be successful," Trent said. "We still lack many of the soft skills you need to be a reliable employee."

Those concerns, Trent said, are reflected in current student performance data.

While graduation rates have improved, Trent pointed to lingering academic challenges. Trent notes that only about 68% of students are passing the English end-of-course exam, and roughly 51.6% are passing algebra.

"These are critical skills that the jobs of tomorrow need," Trent said. "It will be extremely hard to fill the jobs of tomorrow without a high school degree and additional training and skills."

As South Carolina continues to grow and attract new industry, Trent said the connection between education and economic development is becoming more urgent.

"We need to be prepared for those jobs of tomorrow," Trent said. "And the way we get there is a well-educated workforce. We've got to have our workforce ready for South Carolina to be ground zero for economic growth, which is what we see happening."

Trent also acknowledged the evolving education landscape, including the rise of charter schools, which he said presents both competition and opportunity.

"We're going to have to make sure we fight for our current schools," Trent said. "Not to say competition is not a good thing. I think what the charter schools do, a lot of our traditional public schools can learn from that model. I just don't want an area like Greenwood to be left behind."

Looking ahead, Trent said progress will depend on a willingness to adapt and continue building on momentum gained in recent years. Trent points to State Superintendent of Education Ellen Weaver as someone helping push that forward.

"We made a lot of good efforts coming out of COVID, and I think we need to keep that momentum going," Trent said.

For Trent, the path from a local boardroom in Greenwood to a seat at the state level has only reinforced what he has believed all along:

Behind every policy is a student, a teacher and a community counting on those decisions to get it right.

Contact staff writer Mya Atten at 864-943-5644 or email: matten@indexjournal.com.

Protesters sprayed, not silenced

50501, Lander students respond to attack

From staff reports

The group behind the "No Kings" protests in Greenwood says it will continue organizing despite what it describes as an attack on attendees.

In a statement released after the March 28 demonstration, 50501 Greenwood said a passing driver targeted protesters, prompting first aid from on-site volunteers and a response from Greenwood County EMS.

Organizers wrote the incident reflects a broader pattern of escalating political rhetoric, including what they described as violent language used by MAGA supporters and others.

"There's a direct connection between that rhetoric and this kind of attack on people peacefully exercising their Constitutional rights," the statement reads.

More than 150 people gathered



RENEE ORTIZ | INDEX-JOURNAL

More than 150 people gathered as part of the nationwide "No Kings" movement on March 28.

in Greenwood as part of the nationwide "No Kings" movement. The protest was intended to be a peaceful, community-focused event.

The demonstration was disrupted when Joe Keith Jensen, 68, of 108 Sproles Avenue in Greenwood, drove past the crowd and allegedly sprayed multiple protesters with pepper spray.

Several individuals were affected, including a 25-year-old man, an 81-year-old man, a 67-year-old woman and a 60-year-old woman, according to a Greenwood Police incident report. Victims reported burning skin, eye irritation and respiratory discomfort.

Jensen was arrested March 29 and charged with six counts of assault and battery and battery in the third degree, with each count tied to individual victims.

50501 Greenwood condemned the attack as "unwarranted and illegal" while emphasizing that Jensen is entitled to due process.

The incident marked the first reported disruption at a local "No Kings" protest, according to Greenwood Police Chief TJ Chaudoin.

"People have the right to peacefully protest without interference, and this type of behavior will not be tolerated," Chaudoin said.

A statement from Lander University College Democrats President Jonah Cooley said several students were among those affected during the protest.

Cooley said six Lander students attended the demonstration, five of whom were members of the College Democrats, and all five were pepper sprayed alongside other

community members.

"We will not be silent," Cooley said.

He described the incident as part of a broader concern about political violence.

"The history of our country, particularly in South Carolina, has already been scarred too much by political violence," Cooley said. "Incidents like these only serve to divide our country and scare people into silence."

Both groups also thanked the Greenwood Police Department and Greenwood County EMS for their responses.

"We are overwhelmed by the support we have received from the community after this attack, and we promise it will not deter 50501 Greenwood from future events and demonstrations," the state-

FOIAs filed

The Index-Journal has filed Freedom of Information Act requests with the City of Greenwood and Greenwood County EMS seeking records related to the March 28 pepper spray incident at the "No Kings" protest.

The request to the city includes downtown surveillance footage, including any video that may show the suspect vehicle or the incident.

Greenwood City responded March 30, stating the records are being withheld due to an ongoing investigation.

A separate FOIA request to Greenwood County EMS for 911 records was fulfilled. Audio from the 911 call, including the caller's firsthand account of the incident, is available on the Index-Journal's Facebook page.

ment reads.

Despite the incident, 50501 organizers said they remain committed to nonviolence. They also encouraged anyone impacted by the spraying to contact 50501 Greenwood or the Greenwood Police Department.