

CALENDAR

Index-Journal's Community Calendar is a public reminder of special events and meetings sponsored by civic clubs, community groups and governing bodies for up to seven days of publication. Deadline for these items is seven days prior.

TODAY

- 10 a.m. – 11th Step A.A., 113 Mason St.
- 8 p.m. – Night A.A. and A-Anon Family Group, 113 Mason St.
- 8 p.m. – Narcotics Anonymous, Abbeville Civic Center.

MONDAY

- 10 a.m. – Athenium Study Club at Greenwood County Library. George Wilson talks about "Prison Ministry."
- 10 a.m. – Early Bird A.A., 113 Mason St.
- 10 a.m. – Discover Your Hidden Skills, free workshop, Greenwood County Workforce Center, 519 Monument St.
- 11 a.m. – Silver Sneakers, free senior fitness classes (muscular strength and range of movement) at Anytime Fitness, 1560 Parkway, 227-9955.
- Noon-1 p.m. – Lunch Bunch A.A., 113 Mason St.
- 1-2 p.m. – Survivors of Sexual Trauma Support Group, for adults who have experienced any type of sexual assault, to learn coping skills, gain support and empowerment to help healing process, at Sexual Trauma and Counseling Center, 115 E. Alexander Ave. Call Susan or Kris to sign up 227-1623.
- 1-2 p.m. – Breastfeeding, free classes, location provided upon registration. Call to register: Brandi Thomas, RN, International Board certified lactation consultant, 725-5748 or (877) 892-0024.
- 3 p.m. – Phelea Study Club at Greenwood Woman's Club. Dot Wise will review the book "Just Take my Heart" by Mary Higgins Clark.
- 4 p.m. – National Federation of the Blind of Greenwood, at the Soup Kitchen.
- 5:30 p.m. – Neighborhood Association Council at Greenwood Chamber of Commerce. Call Toni Able, 223-8431.
- 5:30 p.m. – West Side A.A., St. Mark United Methodist Church.
- 6 p.m. – Weight Watchers at Piedmont Plaza, Bypass 72 N.E. and Durst Avenue, next to GAC.
- 6:15 p.m. – Heritage Sertoma of Greenwood, dinner, 6:15, meeting, 6:45, Sertoma Foundation Building, 111 E. Alexander Ave. Prospective members welcome. Call 543-3605.
- 6:30-7:30 p.m. – Crossroads Survivors of Suicide Support Group, Lowell Street United Methodist Church, 300 Lowell St. Call 229-2704.
- 6:30-7:30 p.m. – A.A. meeting at The Depot, Ninety Six.
- 6:45 p.m. – Ninety Six Historical Society, Visitor's Center.
- 7 p.m. – Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8131 at Turner House, 123 Bailey Circle. Call 388-0339. Meals will be served by Ladies Auxiliary.
- 7 p.m. – Old Abbeville Camp No. 39, Sons of Confederate Veterans, Grange Road. Call 543-1571.
- 7 p.m. – Health Seekers Support Group, Greenwood Seventh-day Adventist Church, Highway 254.
- 7:30 p.m. – McCormick A.A., Senior Citizens Building.
- 8 p.m. – Night A.A., 113 Mason St.
- 8 p.m. – Narcotics Anonymous, Immanuel Lutheran Church, 501 E. Creswell Ave.

TUESDAY

- 9 a.m. – Greenwood Golden K Kiwanis Club at American Legion Post 20. Selma Jones presents "Acupuncture as an Alternative."

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PHOTOS BY MICHELLE LAXER | INDEX-JOURNAL

McCormick County Council Chairman Charles Jennings and Frank Clayton of the 96 District RC & D Council lead the line of golf carts for Saturday's orientation tour of the Savannah Valley Railroad Trail. This was the first time Jennings saw the completed trail.

TRAIL BLAZERS

McCormick County officials tour first part of railroad trail

By MICHELLE LAXER
mlaxer@indexjournal.com

MCCORMICK — McCormick County Council went for a ride in the woods Saturday morning for the orientation tour of the first open leg of the Savannah Valley Railroad Trail.

"Basically, it was to explain to the county council members how the project is proceeding," said Don Norton, a leader of the Savannah Valley Railroad Trail steering committee. The 96 District Resource Conversation and Development Council is also working on the trail project.

First responders Henry Deason and Chris Doolittle came along for the tour to become familiar with the trail in case of emergencies.

Norton and other members of the steering committee lead the first responders and council members Charles Jennings, John Philcox and Bernie Hamby down the 2-mile trail in golf carts, which are normally prohibited. The trail was specifically made for walkers and bikers.

The trailhead is located on Barksdale Ferry Road next door to the McCormick Country Club. A short access path from the parking lot leads hikers to the actual trail, where it crosses Barksdale Ferry Road and goes into the woods. While on the trail, walkers and bikers can see remains of old railroad ties and whistle markers. The trail is not paved and Norton said there are no plans to change that. The only thing left to add to the trail is mile markers and signage.

The completed section, which was made open to the public in October, ends at Cemetery Road. At the end of the trail, hikers have a choice to see two different historical landmarks. To the left is a spring house that belonged to James L. Petigru, a South Carolina politician who opposed secession. Walk to the right and hikers will come to the Petigru family's Badwell Cemetery, which the U.S. Forest Service is trying to restore after vandals left some tombstones broken.

The Savannah Valley Railroad Trail is part of the Rails-To-Trails program that turns old railroads into walking and biking trails. In the late 1800s, the Savannah Valley Railroad ran between Anderson and Charleston. Service was discontinued in 1987, and the South Carolina Department of Commerce purchased it in 1983. The idea for the trail project came about in the mid-1990s, but due to



Members of the McCormick County Council, left, and members of the Savannah Valley Railroad Trail steering committee look at a map of the entire eight-mile trail. The steering committee led an orientation tour of the trail Saturday morning for McCormick County officials.

lack of funding and support, the project just only got started recently.

Norton said volunteers from the John de la Howe House, the Marines and the Boy Scouts started to clear the trail of vegetation and trees last fall. The project had help from about 300 volunteers, and that help is still needed for trail maintenance. He hopes that he can get groups to "sponsor" a mile of the trail for maintenance.

The trail is supposed to stretch another six miles to Willington, but the 96 RC & D council has a bridge to cross before that leg is completed. Literally.

A wood walking bridge must be built over the Old Mill Creek trestle for the project to continue.

"We also have to be sure that the trestle itself is safe and that's going to take a large sum of money," said Frank Clayton, steering committee member.

A lack of funding has prevented the council from the trestle project. It will apply for the fourth time for a parks, recreation and tourism grant to help with funding.

Until then, the committee will work with the U.S. Forest Service to develop alternative access trails at different points along Savannah Valley Railroad.

Wallace Wood, a member of the steering committee, said the project fits into the council's plans for more nature-based tourism.

"I think it's an economic development project because once it's completed and advertised, people will drive to it," he said. "People are looking for these opportunities."

Philcox, vice chairman of the council, said it was important for



Don Norton reads a tombstone in the Badwell Cemetery during Saturday's orientation tour of the Savannah Valley Railroad Trail in McCormick. The cemetery is at the end of the just-opened 2 mile stretch of the trail.

McCormick to embrace what it has to offer for recreation.

"We should plan to use our natural resources to make people aware of our beautiful county," he said.

Jennings, council chairman, was part of the early discussions for the trail project and said he never thought it would become a reality.

"The groups really got together and really did a good job working on this trail," he said. Jennings said he plans to take his 5-mile walks with his wife on the new trail.

LOCAL DIGEST

Constitution event to be at library

The Greenwood County Library will host a Constitution Workshop 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Nov. 13 in the auditorium, 600 S. Main St., Greenwood.

Robert Jeffrey, Associate Professor of Government at Wofford College, will be the guest speaker. Participants should enter through the side doors, bring a copy of The Constitution of the United States and \$20, which includes lunch.

For information, call 227-0687 or 554-1235.

Saluda celebrates Veterans Day

The American Legion Post 65 will have their Veterans Day program at 4 p.m., Nov. 11 at the Saluda County Courthouse.

Speakers will be Pastor Ed Miller, The Honorable Frank Addy, and The Honorable Marion Frye. In case of inclement weather, the program will be in the Saluda Theater.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

The following businesses and agencies are closed in observance of Veterans Day:

- Abbeville County
- McCormick, town and county
- Saluda, town and county
- State offices, including employment offices and the Department of Motor Vehicles. SCDMV customers have the option of processing many transactions online at www.scdmvonline.com.
- Federal offices, including post offices
- Area banks

CONGESTION

Traffic plan could mean toll lanes on I-526

Associated Press

CHARLESTON — The state Transportation Department is considering adding toll lanes on Interstate 526 to help ease traffic congestion around Charleston.

The Post and Courier of Charleston reported Saturday that toll roads will be among a number of options considered by a traffic-release study that will begin in January.

"It's something that the federal government wants us to look at," said Michael Dennis, a DOT technical applications engineer.

If the toll option is chosen, it would mean new adding lanes to the existing road and would be a first for South Carolina, which has just a few toll roads.

"We're just trying to look at everything we can," Dennis said.

Other options being considered are new interchange configurations and ride-sharing, said Rick Day, a civil engineer with Stantac Inc. Stantac is being considered for the \$1 million federal contract to study fixes for about eight miles of the road from Interstate 26 to U.S. 17 south of Charleston.

State Transportation officials say the road is at capacity with average daily traffic of up to 78,000 vehicles. The addition of a Boeing manufacturing facility along the road is expected to make traffic worse.

Day said toll lanes have been successful in other cities, including Atlanta, which recently opened one.

Regardless of which option is chosen, money will be an issue.

Lawmakers are considering an 5.5-cent increase in the state's gasoline tax, which is used for road and bridge repairs and hasn't been increased in more than 20 years. At 16.75 cents per gallon, South Carolina's gas tax is the nation's fourth lowest.