

SPORTS

Johnson lurks but weather steals his thunder at Harbour Town 1B



SPORTS

USC's tough schedule will require tough defense 1B



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Partly sunny
61°/45° See 2A

The State

No charges in case of 5th-grade girl who died

BY CHARLES DUNCAN
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The death of a 10-year-old girl two days after a classroom fight in a South Carolina elementary school was the result of natural causes, and no charges will be filed, the prosecutor leading the investigation said Friday morning.

Investigators released their preliminary findings in the death of Raniya Wright during a press conference broadcast live by WCSC. Raniya had a neurological problem that ultimately caused her death, Solicitor Duffy Stone said.

Despite the autopsy result, attorneys for Raniya's family said they are pursuing their own investigation and accused the

school of not addressing issues with bullying.

Raniya died two days after a fight at Forest Hills Elementary School in Walterboro.

Stone said Raniya had been to the doctor seven times complaining of headaches and dizziness over the past two years. A team of specialists at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston made the conclu-

sion on Raniya's cause of death, he said.

Stone and Colleton County Sheriff R.A. Strickland said there were no signs of trauma from the fight.

The two girls were pulled apart in five to 10 seconds by a teacher in the classroom, Strickland said.

"This does not appear to be a case of bullying," the sheriff

said, "This is a hard case to accept."

A lawyer representing Ashley Wright, Raniya's mother, said a classmate attacked Raniya from behind that day, March 25, punching her in the head and slamming her into a bookshelf.

Attorney Margie Pizarro spoke at the same press conference Friday morning, with Raniya's mother standing by her side.

"This is not where the story ends," Pizarro said, noting she is conducting her own investigation into what led up to the fight and what happened in the classroom that day.

She said Raniya was involved in two incidents with the same girl that day.

SEE NO CHARGES, 6A

Student's death prompts action

BY JEFF WILKINSON
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COLUMBIA

This weekend, when throngs of University of South Carolina students leave Five Points bars at closing time, some serious folks will have their backs.

The 20 or so bars that are popular with the late-night college crowd have agreed in writing to have their door staff on the streets, available to escort patrons to their ride-share and look out for signs of trouble.

The pledge comes after the horrific killing of USC co-ed Samantha Josephson on March 29. The effort was launched by Fabian Ludwig, the head bouncer at Taneyhill's Group Therapy, which has operated in Five Points since 1978.

"It's such a horrible thing that happened, we're willing to do whatever we can to help," said bar owner Steve Taneyhill, a former Gamecocks football great who purchased Group Therapy in 2016. "Pretty much everyone in Five Points jumped on it."

Police say Josephson, a 21-year-old USC student from New Jersey, was slashed to death after she mistakenly hopped into a car with a man she thought was her Uber driver.

SEE BARS, 6A



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Flowers and candles are left at a memorial for slain USC student Samantha Josephson at the Five Points Fountain. Bar workers in the area are taking action.

Lexington fastest-growing county in Midlands, census says



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In Chapin, about 16,500 vehicles travel daily on Columbia Avenue and U.S. 76, thoroughfares that intersect near a railroad crossing in the center of town, according to state traffic counts. Backups during rush hours as well as when students arrive and leave schools are common. Chapin's steady growth is expected to boom in the next five years.

BY ISABELLA CUETO
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LEXINGTON COUNTY, SC

New census data show Lexington County is the fastest-growing county in the Midlands, and the sixth-fastest-growing county in South Carolina.

Lexington County saw a 12.42% change in population from 2010 to 2018, and a 1.45% change from 2017 to 2018, according to the data. Horry County had the biggest jump in population, with an almost 28% change from 2010 to 2018, including almost 4% growth from 2017 to 2018 alone.

Two-thirds of counties in the Carolinas grew between 2017 and 2018, the census estimates show.

The top four South Carolina counties after Horry were:

- Berkeley County, with a 23.99% change from 2010 to 2018, including a 3% change from 2017 to 2018.
- Lancaster County, with a 24.43% change from 2010 to

Estimated 2018 population totals for three Midlands counties

Lexington County: total population, 295,032, up 12.42% from 2010 and 1.45% from 2017

Richland County: total population, 414,576, up 7.84% from 2010 and .75% from 2017

Kershaw County: total population, 65,592, up 6.49% from 2010 and .77 percent from 2017

2018, and a 2.98% change from 2017 to 2018.

- York County, with a 21.27% change from 2010 to 2018, and 3% change from 2017 to 2018.
- Spartanburg County, with a 10.40% change from 2010 to 2018, and 2.37% change from 2017 to 2018.

Lexington County's estimated population has swelled by more than 30,000 people since 2010, when the last census was taken. While its population is smaller than Richland County's, it has seen more rapid influx, which is reflected in a slew of new

businesses and homes, plus creaking infrastructure and a need for schools.

In November 2018, two of the county's school districts asked voters to OK money to build schools and improve existing ones. Lexington 1 school district got voters' approval to take on a \$365 million building plan to pay for renovations to schools district-wide, replacement buildings for Lexington and Pelion middle schools and construction of three elementary schools.

School district officials estimate more than 500 new students have enrolled every

school year since the 1990s. In the 2017-2018 school year, the district grew by 616 students, the district estimated.

"That's about a new elementary school per year," said Jeff Salters, chief operations officer for the school district.

In Lexington District 3 in the Batesburg-Leesville area, voters in November said no to a plan to build a new high school.

Lexington-Richland 5, which serves students in the Chapin and Irmo areas, is also building an elementary school to accommodate growth. Earlier this year, the school district placed an enrollment freeze on two elementary schools that it said were overcrowded.

Recently, Lexington County Council began considering an ordinance that would curb development in the areas with the most growth. The proposal being pushed by council member Darrell Hudson aims to limit the number of homes that can be built per acre.

Hudson, who has owned a

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