

I-385 rehab project ahead of schedule / 1B



Jenkins is focused on team, not honors / 1C



Carnival of Madness rocks Heritage Park / Weekend



High: 90°  
Weather, 6B

# The Greenville News



Greenville,  
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## Charter schools protest center fees

District says it should be 'reimbursed' for use of fine arts, career services

By Ron Barnett

STAFF WRITER  
rbarnett@greenvillenews.com

If you are in a private school, or are home-schooled, you can go part-time to the Greenville County school district's Fine Arts Center or one of its career centers for free.

But if you are a student in one of the county's charter schools, it's going to cost

you, or your school, nearly \$3,000.

That's the decision made by the district's administration — without seeking school board approval — as the district looks to further tighten its belt in the face of continuing budget cuts.

Officials of the three charter high schools in the county are pressing the dis-

trict to relent on that "tuition" plan or fork over federal and state money from special allocations that are drawn down by charter students.

"In essence, the district is putting up boundaries for public school student access while allowing free access for those outside the public school system," Greenville Tech Charter High Principal Fred Crawford wrote in a message to charter school leaders.

The district's position is

that charter schools receive funds, through the district, for full-day classes, and therefore the charter schools should "reimburse" the district for any services the district provides, spokesman Oby Lyles said.

"The district recognizes that during these economic times all schools will be required to make hard choices," Laura Herd, coordinator of school and program accountability for the district wrote in an e-

mail to Edward "Skip" Snow, business manager at Greenville Tech Charter High.

"The district schools are also facing multiple challenges and the prospect of eliminating or cutting back on the choices our students have had in the past."

David Gantt, operations director and legal counsel for the three charter high schools affiliated with Greenville Technical College, said the district is drawing down money from

such federal programs as Title 1, for low-income students, and IDEA, for special education students, and not passing the money on to charter schools.

"We were OK with that happening as long as we got access to the Fine Arts Center and other programs just like district students," he said.

Of the 978 students in the three charter high schools — Greenville Tech

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## Homebuyers build on modest foundation

Building permits rise, but new houses more affordable, smaller

By Angelia Davis

STAFF WRITER  
adavis@greenvillenews.com

Sally Nicholson doesn't necessarily consider now a good time to build a new home, but the 59-year-old chose to move forward with plans to downsize into a smaller, more environmentally friendly house in spite of her concerns about the economy.

Her decision to build may be a reflection of what others also are doing in the Greenville area.

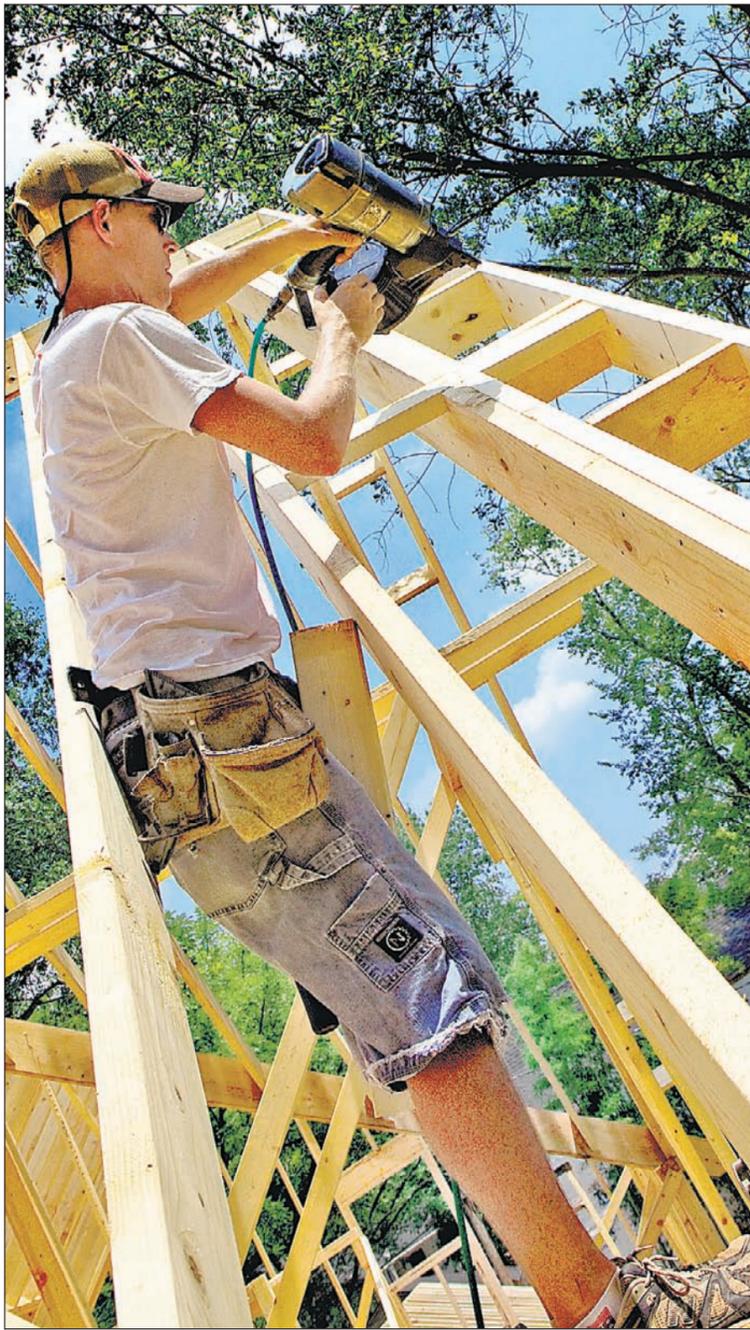
Upstate residential building permits were up 9.5 percent in the first half of the year and a whopping 30.7 percent in Greenville, according to market data from Knoxville-based The Market Edge. The numbers also suggest another trend — that much of the new building is for more modest homes and the days of the McMansion, at least for now, are over in the wake of the nation's financial slide. Analysts speak of a "new normal" and a resetting of buyers' expectations of what they aspire to in a home.

Dale Akins, president of the Market Edge, said the general consensus is that most of the permits are for entry-level or move-up housing.

"While we certainly think this is true, our data shows building permits for 'high-end' houses have been steadily decreasing since the peak in 2006," he said.

From 2008 to 2009, the number of permits issued with values of

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KEN OSBURN / Staff

Brian Suddeth works on a new home being built in the Augusta Road area of Greenville. A big spike in building permit applications in the Upstate in the first half of 2010 has homebuilders in a better mood than they have been in years.

## State backs law to curb illegals

McMaster says feds not enforcing existing laws

By David Dykes

STAFF WRITER  
ddykes@greenvillenews.com

South Carolina has stepped up its profile on immigration, throwing its weight behind a court argument supporting Arizona's law and contending that states must do something meaningful about enforcement because the federal government hasn't.

At the same time, a bill pending in the South Carolina Legislature would allow state law enforcement officers, during a valid traffic or other stop, to detain people suspected of being in the country illegally until their immigration status can be determined.

It's a step similar to Arizona's, reflecting the states' duty to step up against illegal immigration, Attorney General Henry McMaster told *The Greenville News*.

The federal government "has ample authority" to protect the nation's borders and to enforce immigration laws, but "we all know they are not doing it," said McMaster, a Republican who ran unsuccessfully for governor this year.

"They have abdicated their responsibility, despite enormous public outcry," he said Thursday.

Immigration has been a hot-button issue in South Carolina, where Republicans have come under intense public criticism for not being conservative enough in a state that leans decidedly to the right.

In particular, U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham has felt the sting from grassroots Republicans who have voted to censure him for his support of a federal financial bailout bill and measures on immigration and climate change.

The Greenville County Republican Executive Committee voted to censure Graham three years ago for his stance on immigration.

The Republican from Seneca has said that while he can accept criticism, he doesn't want the party to be influenced by GOP members who are more Libertarian and don't share his values or those of some

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## Apartment complex given green light

Brookside Gardens clears hurdle

By David Dykes

STAFF WRITER  
ddykes@greenvillenews.com

Plans for low-income apartments off Wade Hampton Boulevard received final approval from a quasi-judicial city board Thursday night, a move that likely will cap years of controversy and months of delay.

The Board of Zoning Appeals voted unanimously to allow development of the 55-unit Brookside Gardens

project to continue under a revised landscaping site plan that restricts building on the site and calls for planting of extra trees to screen neighbors from the apartments.

"We are grateful to have this long ordeal behind us, and look forward to building a community the neighborhood and city will be proud of," the developer, David Douglas, president of Douglas Development, said in a statement.

Donna Rhyne, one of the most vocal opponents of the project, said she was disappointed with the deci-

sion.

"I think the city clearly acted within their authority and that the correct next step would be to allow Mr. Douglas to go to the planning commission and air it in public," Rhyne said.

At issue had been six trees — two pines, two sweet gums, an oak and a poplar — that Douglas said were accidentally removed from the Brookside Circle site, but that the city said gave it justification to revoke permits that opponents had long questioned.

Douglas appealed the revocation of those per-

mits, setting up the zoning appeals board decision, which limits development to a single three-story building.

Some neighbors have welcomed the project as a long-sought improvement and a boon for senior housing. Others, however, have raised concerns over the low-income tenants, the potential traffic and the scale of the building they fear would tower over single-family homes.

Supporters said that as the need for affordable housing in Greenville continued to grow, city officials

approached Douglas to investigate redeveloping blighted property.

The project had become emblematic of several city disputes in which residents in urban areas sometimes appealed to the courts to prevent commercial and multi-family development next to neighborhoods.

The Greenville Local Development Corp., an arm of the city, gave Douglas a \$350,000 three-year, low-interest loan for the site that Douglas said he has paid back and that was applied to acquisition of the nearly \$700,000 parcel.