

Schools launch drone policy, hoping rules will catch up

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Beyond the cheers in the stands and above the action on the gridiron, Georgetown County school officials will keep an ear and an eye out for drones during the high school football season. A policy up for review by the school board would ban drone flights

from or over district property without approval from the superintendent.

Whether the policy could be enforced is also up in the air.

"We probably don't have a lot of enforcement," said Lindsey Anne Thompson, the district's staff attorney. She hopes that the state and federal government will

SEE "DRONES," PAGE 6

A drone hovers over beachgoers on Pawleys Island. The town has also looked for ways to deal with privacy and safety issues.

Tanya Ackerman/
Coastal Observer



ENVIRONMENT

Neighbors ask court to enjoin Prince George development

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Property owners at Prince George will ask a judge this month for a temporary restraining order to block development on 1,200 acres that they say will harm wetlands and endangered wildlife.

A suit filed in Circuit Court claims the owner of the property violated the conservation easement placed on the property by the original developers by cutting roads through the property, including wetlands and habitat of red-cockaded woodpeckers. The Prince George Community Association wants the court to enjoin the owner, PG Preservation LLC, from "all land disturbance activities," according to court filings.

The property is part of 1,800 acres between the Atlantic Ocean and the Waccamaw River that was bought by the University of South Carolina Development Foundation from the FDIC in 1994. A private group developed 600 acres as homesites. The foundation kept the rest and planned to use it for research and environmental education programs, activities that were recorded in an agreement between the parties. The conservation easement was given by the foundation to the state Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism.

PG Preservation bought the 1,200 acres from the USC Foundation in April 2015 for \$3.9 million. Phillip Lammonds, the broker for the sale, said at the time the buyer was a family that wanted to remain anonymous. Tax notices for the property continue to go to Lammonds. The agent for the

SEE "COURT," PAGE 4



Tanya Ackerman/Coastal Observer



First of the season

A loggerhead hatchling makes its way to the ocean from the season's first nest to hatch on Pawleys Island. There have been 23 nests laid. Volunteers, left, inventory the nest and share sea turtle information with spectators.

SANTEE COOPER

Amid turmoil over reactors, utility seeks comment on rates

BY NIKKI BEST
COASTAL OBSERVER

State lawmakers say it is too early to know how the decision to pull the plug on construction of two nuclear plants will impact future rates or the status of the state-owned utility that supplies power to Georgetown County customers.

"I would like for everyone to know up front there is no magic bullet for this problem," state Sen. Stephen Goldfinch said.

He was named this week to a committee to review why the project failed.

Santee Cooper has a hearing scheduled next week at the Waccamaw Library on a rate increase that is driven in part by the cost overruns for the nuclear plant.

Santee Cooper and SCE&G announced late last month they would cease construction of two new nuclear power units in Jenkinsville.

The utilities stopped the project after determining the \$14 bil-

lion cost estimated by contractor Westinghouse was incorrect. Analyses placed the cost of the project at more than \$21 billion. Westinghouse filed for bankruptcy in March.

V.C. Summer Units 2 and 3 were planned in 2008 and construction began in 2012. A reactor was placed in Summer Unit 2 in Aug. 2016, but the unit is unfinished and not operational. Unit 1 was completed in 1983 and Santee Cooper has a third ownership in it. SCE&G is the

majority shareholder on all the nuclear sites. Had construction on Units 2 and 3 not been abandoned, the state-owned utility would hold 45 percent interest in them. That 45 percent interest, as it stands, will cost Santee Cooper customers just under \$7 billion. "Even considering these project challenges, Santee Cooper is proud of our role in this initial effort to restart a 30-years-dormant industry. Nuclear power needs to remain

SEE "UTILITY," PAGE 3

ECONOMY | Lidl

Why another grocery store? Maybe the 29¢ eggs?

BY NIKKI BEST
COASTAL OBSERVER

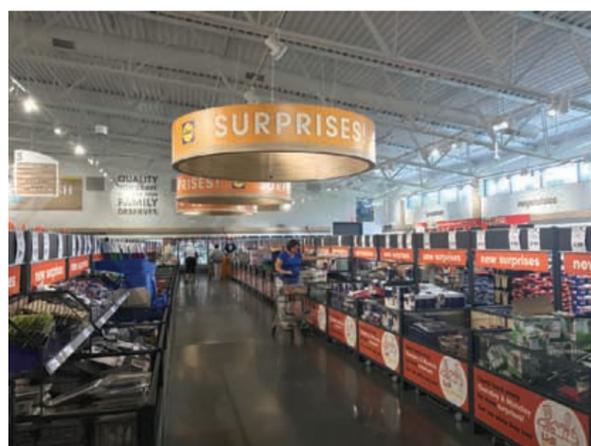
The Germans are coming. And they're bringing low prices.

The European supermarket chain Lidl has its sight set on 4.8 acres at Petrigru Drive and Highway 17 for the store. Georgetown County Council has a recommendation from the Planning Commission to amend the "flexible design district" zoning for the site to accommodate the store.

The zoning change raised questions from some residents about the need for a sixth grocery store in the Pawleys Island area. It also raised the question, what is Lidl (pronounced LEE-dil)?

It's a new concept grocery store. Think Aldi, with a dash of Trader Joe's and a little bit of a Walmart Neighborhood Market. Under the "rethink grocery" slogan, the stores operate with less shelving and products that mostly are still in original shipping boxes. The company professes, "High quality. Low prices. It's quite simple."

"I definitely come here for the prices," said Angela Lewis, who was shopping over the weekend at the Lidl that opened in Greenville in June. Even though she



Nikki Best/Coastal Observer

Lidl stores have a section for "surprises," which arrive every Thursday. At the Greenville store they ranged from power tools to running shoes this week.

lives in Mauldin, less than a few miles from supermarkets like Ingles, Bi-Lo and Publix, Lewis has made the trip across town several times. "It makes sense that this store is near all the other places I bargain hunt."

Lewis would not divulge her secrets to savings, but she

pointed out some of the staples she buys from Lidl. "Eggs for 29 cents, milk for \$1.50, a pound of bacon for \$3," she said. "Little stuff like this really adds up for my family."

Will Harwood, a spokesman for Lidl, says the brand works to maintain across the board

pricing in its stores, so prices in Greenville should be the same or very similar to those in Pawleys Island. It's all about efficiency for the store.

"When we think about waste we don't just think about product that ends up in the garbage at the end of the day, we think about all excess that adds cost to a product that a customer isn't willing to pay for," Harwood said. "So whether it's the distance we move pallets in our warehouses or whether it's how we merchandise our produce, and through all these measures we are able to run extremely efficient operations which we end up passing directly onto the customer with lower prices."

The lower prices are undeniable. Besides eggs and milk, Lidl offers other staples at prices lower than Food Lion or Publix, the closest stores to the store planned for Pawleys Island. Raspberries and blueberries are both at least \$1 less each. Sugar is 25 percent less and bacon costs at least 20 percent less. "That's the bedrock," Harwood said.

A Lidl is smaller than a typical grocery store. The Pawleys store will have 35,962 square

SEE "GROCERY," PAGE 4

PAWLEYS ISLAND

Mayor pro tem will follow mayor into retirement after election

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

The town of Pawleys Island will lose its mayor and its mayor pro tem. Council Member Mike Adams said this week he will not seek another term.

"I was going to run. Subsequently, things have changed a little bit," he said. He plans to spend more time with his family.

Mayor Bill Otis announced in January that he would step down after 20 years in office. Jimmy Braswell, a member of the Planning Commission, filed last week for mayor. He was the only candidate as of Wednesday.

The other newcomer to the council election is Guerry Green, who filed last week for one of the four council seats. He chaired the committee that developed the project to move the island's electric and cable television lines underground. He has also served as chairman of Santee Cooper, the state owned electric utility.

Green owns Screen Tight, which manufactures a porch screening system he developed. He grew up at DeBordieu, where his family were the first residents. He started work bagging groceries at Marlow's Store, now Frank's restaurant.

Green was travelling this week, but said by email "Pawleys is a unique treasure and it would be a privilege and honor to serve on Town Council."

Adams, who was first elected to the council in 1999, said he

SEE "PAWLEYS," PAGE 4



Mike Adams

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



New faces: The National Sculpture Society's annual juried exhibition returns to Brookgreen Gardens.

SECOND FRONT

Offshore oil: Opponents push for public comments as deadline nears for lease plan. **PAGE 6**

Obituaries	2
Crime.....	7
Opinion	8
Crossword.....	12
What's On.....	13
Classifieds.....	14
Sports.....	19
Property transfers	21

Online
coastalobserver.com



7 36211 59266 8