

# COASTAL OBSERVER

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## Appeals Court lets DeBordieu challenge marsh claim

BY CHARLES SWENSON  
COASTAL OBSERVER

The Belle W. Baruch Foundation's claim to about 8,000 acres of marsh adjacent to Hobcaw Barony will resume following a ruling by the state Court of Appeals last week that allows property owners at DeBordieu a role in the legal proceedings.

A three-judge panel overturned a Circuit Court judge's 2020 ruling that the DeBordieu Colony Community Association could not intervene in the suit.

The court rules "set a liberal standard for intervention. Denying intervention here was inconsistent with that standard,"



DeBordieu residents say they are concerned about preserving their access to North Inlet.

Charles Swenson/  
Coastal Observer

Judge Blake Hewitt wrote in the opinion. Chief Judge Bruce Williams and Judge Letitia Verdin concurred.

"We appreciate the court's

analysis of our arguments and their decision," said Blanche Brown, the executive director of the association.

George Chastain, the Ba-

ruch Foundation's executive director, pointed out that the issue was procedural. "We're glad to have that resolved and ready to move forward," he said.

The foundation filed suit against the state in the fall of 2019 seeking a ruling that it has a king's grant title to the  
**SEE "HOBCAW," PAGE 3**

### LITCHFIELD BEACH

## Neighbors file lawsuit over creation of new lots

BY CHARLES SWENSON  
COASTAL OBSERVER

Property owners at Litchfield Beach filed suit this week to overturn Georgetown County's approval of a zoning change that allows two new houses to be built on the site of a former water treatment plant at Inlet Point South.

"County Council members had no idea what they were amending when they voted to approve the amendment," according to the suit filed in Circuit Court on behalf of Ray Tanner and Salty Rims LLC.

They own houses on Clubhouse Creek that face the ocean across the .87-acre treatment plant property.

Tanner is the athletic director at the University of South Carolina. The members of Salty Rims are Richard and Laurel Landes and Eric and Jennifer Obaugh of Staunton, Va.

The plaintiffs were among the owners in the gated community who told the Planning Commission and County Council that the new houses would block views that they thought were protected through restrictive covenants and the county's "planned development" zoning.

The property is owned by the Peninsula at Inlet Point South Owners Association, which represents 33 lots.

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Photos by Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

**99 years and counting** | Corrine Hoch and Henrietta Huff uncover a historical marker at Belin Memorial United Methodist Church, starting a countdown to its 100th anniversary in 2025. Leon Rice, below, brought his 1929 Model A Ford to the centennial celebration Sunday.



### LAND USE

## Rare hearing on stormwater leaves residents with questions

BY CHARLES SWENSON  
COASTAL OBSERVER

The issue was stormwater. The questions were about traffic, landscaping and how the public can provide comments on a proposed gas station and convenience store on Highway 17 in Pawleys Island.

"People aren't happy," Matt Collison, a Heritage Plantation resident said. "The community does not want this."

The proposal for a Refuel store at the corner of Beaumont Drive and Highway 17 generated enough comments for Georgetown County's Stormwater Division to hold a public hearing on the project. It was

the first such hearing anyone could remember.

Robert Turner, who started work last fall as the county's chief engineer, said he discovered a provision in the stormwater ordinance that requires a hearing if 20 or more comments are received. State agencies have similar provisions in their permitting process and the Department of Health and Environmental Control was scheduled to hold a hearing last spring on a convenience store project in Litchfield before the applicant withdrew the proposal in the face of public opposition.

But the hearings are limited  
**SEE "STORMWATER," PAGE 2**

### GEORGETOWN COUNTY

## As budget surplus climbs, council asks how much is enough?

BY CHARLES SWENSON  
COASTAL OBSERVER

Georgetown County's budget surplus hit a peak last year of nearly \$21 million, nearly double the minimum cushion it set for emergencies or unexpected needs.

County Council members are wondering whether that's too much or whether it's enough.

"We have been discussing that among staff," Angela Christian, the county administrator, said. "We look forward to bringing you a recommendation and

a revision of what our policy has been in the past."

The current policy requires the county maintain a surplus of at least 35 percent of its annual expenditures, but no lower than \$8 million.

"That's the policy we're talking about working on and changing," said Karis Langston, the county finance director.

In 2019, the surplus was \$11.1 million, or just over 30 percent of expenditures, said Alan Thompson, whose Whiteville, N.C., firm conducted the county's annual financial audit.

**SEE "BUDGET," PAGE 2**

### POLITICS | U.S. 7th Congressional District

## In bid for second term, Russell Fry links budget and immigration

BY CHARLES SWENSON  
COASTAL OBSERVER

Russell Fry doesn't want to shut down the federal government.

But the congressman from South Carolina's 7th District told fellow Republicans this week that he voted against a continuing resolution that would keep the doors open because he doesn't want to lose an opportunity to curb illegal immigration and cut spending.

Fry, a former state representative, led a field of seven candidates to capture the GOP nomination in 2022. He avoided a runoff with 51 percent of the vote. He had the endorsement of former President Donald Trump in the effort to unseat Rep. Tom Rice, the incumbent who was one of 10 House Republicans who voted to impeach Trump following the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the Capitol.

Fry is seeking a second term. He was in New Hampshire last weekend campaigning for Trump ahead of that state's primary.

Fry expects a primary challenge from Rodney Berry, a former member of Rice's staff who



**U.S. Rep Russell Fry talks to the county GOP club.**

Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

is the former administrator of Dillon County. Mal Hyman, a professor at Coker College, will seek the Democratic Party nomination. He lost in the 2018 primary.

"Georgetown was so instrumental two years ago in winning the nomination without a runoff," Fry told the county Republican Club. "We have to get

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**Line of march:** Hundreds of cadets compete in Junior ROTC event at Georgetown High. **SECOND FRONT**

**Books:** Author's latest book is a story about an author telling stories.

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