

# COASTAL OBSERVER

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Photos by Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

## South end lot's work in progress

A tractor moves gravel that will form the base of pervious concrete parking spaces at the south end of Pawleys Island. The county-owned beach access closed last month and is due to reopen Dec. 21 with paving and a handicapped-accessible walkway to the top of the dune.



LANDUSE | Marlin Quay

## Rezoning suit reaches high court

BY CHARLES SWENSON  
COASTAL OBSERVER

Eight years after a store and restaurant were torn down at Marlin Quay Marina attorneys argued before the state Supreme Court whether Georgetown County's approval of a new, larger building violated state and local law.

If the county was not in violation, then its approval created a "taking" for which the owner of the neighboring Gulfstream Café should be compensated, Simon Bloom, attorney for Gulfstream told the court at a hearing last week.

An appraiser testified during a trial in Circuit Court in 2022 that the approval of a new Marlin Quay restaurant reduced the value of the Gulfstream property from \$1.85

million to \$90,000.

If the high court finds that the county failed to follow its own ordinance in approving the Marlin Quay building, it should send the case back to Circuit Court to determine the next step.

Henrietta Golding, attorney for the county, said the approval was valid and there is no reason to compensate Gulfstream.

At issue is an easement that gives Gulfstream access to 62 parking spaces in the Marlin Quay "planned development" zoning district, which was created in 1982. Gulfstream argues that increased demand for parking from the new Marlin Quay restaurant will hurt its business.

"There is no loss of 62 parking spaces. That is

unfounded," Golding said. "That is the fundamental basis of Gulfstream's appeal. And that fundamental basis is false."

Palmetto Industrial Development, whose principal is Mark Lawhon, bought the marina in 2014. When he tore down the marina store and restaurant in November 2016, Gulfstream, part of a restaurant group whose principal is Jerry Greenbaum, went to court to block the county's approval of a new facility, which county staff had approved as a minor change to the planned development.

Although the decision was upheld by the county Board of Zoning Appeals, Palmetto agreed to resubmit its plan as a major change requiring review by the Planning Commission, a public hearing and three

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## EDUCATION

### Utility director takes up gavel for school board

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI  
COASTAL OBSERVER

The Georgetown County School Board got a new chairman and three new members this week.

Keith Moore from District 7 was unanimously elected chairman. Moore thanked the board for their "confidence" in him.

"It's going to be challenging, but I know that with the support of the board we can overcome this challenge," Moore said. "I understand that my vote, my opinion, doesn't matter more than anybody else's on the board."

Moore replaces Chairman Bill Gaskins, who could not run for re-election because he no longer lives in District 5.

Moore said he did not

seek the chairmanship, which makes it more special to him.

"They believed that I could do the job and I appreciate that very much," he added.

Kristie Baxley in District 6, Fallon Bordner in District 5 and Eileen Johnson in District 3 were sworn in on Tuesday.

Johnson beat incumbent Sandra Johnson in this month's election for the nonpartisan board. Baxley and Bordner ran unopposed.

Baxley said she wanted to be part of the changes that need to be made to "get to the right place together."

Bordner "used the term 'the village' and I use that a lot. I want to be part of the village," she during comments at the board meeting. "And I want to

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## ROADS

### Georgetown may see benefits from Horry County sales tax

BY CHARLES SWENSON  
COASTAL OBSERVER

A local sales tax approved by Horry County voters this month to raise \$6.35 billion for transportation projects is expected to free up funds for road projects in Georgetown County.

"There are some opportunities for Georgetown County," said Mark Hoeweler, executive director of the Grand Strand Area Transportation Study. The intergovernmental body allocates federal money to state projects in the region.

Horry County's Rural Improvement and Development Effort, better known as RIDE, was initially supported by a hospitality tax.

A 1-cent local option sales tax that passed in 2006 funded \$425 million in projects over seven years. A second tax was approved in 2016 and ran for eight years.

This year, voters were presented with RIDE 4, a slate of projects over 25 years that includes a new road across the Intracoastal Waterway and a provision to match half the cost of the proposed Interstate 73 within Horry County. The link across the waterway, formerly known as the Southern Evacuation Lifeline, has proponents on Waccamaw Neck who see it as a way to divert through traffic from Highway 17.

But RIDE 4 will also fund

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Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

Officials say a transportation tax would be needed to fund a big-ticket project for Georgetown County, like an overpass to relieve congestion at Bypass 17 and Highway 707.

## GEORGETOWN HARBOR

### Dredging project expected in 2026 after environmental study

BY CHARLES SWENSON  
COASTAL OBSERVER

Work is moving forward on a plan to dredge the Georgetown harbor, although the actual work to deepen the channel is still more than a year away.

"To get to the dredging, we've got to do some studies and preliminary work," said Mark Messersmith, the project manager for the Army Corps of Engineers' Charleston District.

Georgetown County Council last week approved a resolution taking responsibility as the non-federal sponsor of the project. That role had been filled by



The channel along the Harborwalk is 6 to 7 feet deep, but shoals limit even recreational boat traffic.

Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

the state, which turned over 40 acres on the waterfront that had operated as a port since 1959 to the county last year. The county also got ownership of over 200 acres farther up the Sampit River that serve as a disposal site for material dredged from the harbor.

As the non-federal sponsor, the county has to provide the land for spoils disposal, provide

access for the dredging project and investigate whether there is any hazardous waste in the project area.

"It doesn't obligate them for funds," Messersmith said.

That will come from the federal government. Last year, \$6.5 million was included in the budget for the Georgetown harbor.

The Corps has evaluated the spoils site. It plans to clear vegetation from the spoils site in the middle of next year, Messersmith said.

"We're about to award a contract for a consulting firm

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