



A strong start for Elliott

Sports 1B



A taste of the alternative

Accent 1C

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TROUBLE AT THE GREENWOOD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

2nd deputy on leave also from drug unit



TONY DAVIS

By **DAMIAN DOMINGUEZ**
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Officials remain tight-lipped about investigations by the State Law Enforcement Division and the Greenwood County Sheriff's Office into "questionable actions" that led to two deputies being placed on administrative leave.

While the sheriff's office would not say who is on leave, a source close to the situation said Friday the second deputy on administrative leave is agent Robbie Byrd with the Greenwood County Drug Enforcement Unit. The Index-Journal learned Wednesday the unit's supervisor, Lt. Brandon Strickland, is also on leave.

An automated response to a reporter's email to Byrd said his county email address was disabled. The phone number listed on the county website for Byrd is disconnected or no longer in service. A call to the sheriff's office Friday requesting Byrd was forwarded to Capt. Sam Watts. Watts would not confirm if Byrd was

on administrative leave, but said Byrd wasn't available and couldn't confirm when he would return.

Under the state's Freedom of Information Act, the Index-Journal filed a request Wednesday for Brandon Strickland's personnel file and records for bank accounts

See **LEAVE**, page 4A



BRANDON STRICKLAND



ROBBIE BYRD

HIGHER EDUCATION

Students fight for in-state benefits from SC colleges

By **ARIEL GILREATH**
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Jacky knew she would attend college, and with her high grades, she knew she would get assistance to pay for her education. But after she was accepted into Converse College, her scholarship and grants were denied, and the tuition was too much for her to handle.

Jacky was born and raised in Greenwood and graduated from Greenwood High School in 2015 with high grades, qualifying her for the South Carolina LIFE scholarship.

Even though she has lived in South Carolina since birth, much longer than many of her graduating peers, Jacky was initially denied the scholarship she earned and any in-state benefits because she could not prove her parents' residency.

Jacky is one of many in South Carolina facing this struggle — students who are born in-state or live in-state for most of their lives, but whose parents are undocumented immigrants. (Jacky's full name is not being published for this reason.)

Dependent students with undocumented parents must fight to prove to universities they are residents of South Carolina.

Normally, for students to receive in-state tuition, scholarships and benefits in South Carolina, they must be in-state residents for 12 months. Dependents are presumed to have the residency status of their parents. There are a few exceptions, but students fulfilling these

See **BENEFITS**, page 5A



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COLIN RIDDLE | INDEX-JOURNAL

The recently-renovated Textile Building in Uptown has three retail spaces and 15 luxury flats. Sugar Boutique and The Frilly Frog have already claimed two of the retail spaces located at 332 Main St.



COLIN RIDDLE | INDEX-JOURNAL

The Greenwood Building's first floor is being renovated to offer a more than 2,000 square feet of retail space at the corner of Main Street and Maxwell Avenue, an area that has received major improvements to attract new investment.

RESURGENCE OF UPTOWN



COLIN RIDDLE | INDEX-JOURNAL

The luxury flats at the Textile Building, 332 Main St., in Uptown will offer views of Main Street from about \$250,000 to \$300,000. The building has 15 flats, which will soon be available for purchase.

PHOTO BY STONEYPOINTECLASSIC.COM



Greenwood's city center continues growing strong

By **COLIN RIDDLE**
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Greenwood's Uptown is experiencing a resurgence, bringing new restaurants, shops and investment to the once industrial-centric hub, where trains used to barrel down the middle of Main Street.

What's happened

The city continues to invest into new streetscapes and cornerstones in Uptown in an effort to promote growth.

City Manager Charlie Barrineau said the city is continuing to invest in Uptown — including adding more

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TODAY: Sunny and cooler. High in the 60s.

FORECAST, 10A



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UPTOWN

Continued from 1A

benches, trees, flowers, paths and lights — to make it more appealing and bring more people to the Uptown area.

Uptown is among the largest tax bases in the county, Barrineau said, has infrastructure in place and plenty of room for growth.

“There’s no reason not to continue to build upon those successes,” Barrineau said.

Uptown’s resurgence started when local leaders raised \$3.5 million to renovate the Federal Building, which now serves as the Arts and Visitors Center, and create a cultural hub for Uptown.

The city used a matching grant from the state to improve the facades along Maxwell Avenue and started investing in new streetscapes, including the next project at Magnolia and Riley avenues.

Those improvements led real estate developer and consultant Tim Burke to purchase the Textile Building at 332 Main St., the six-story building next to Howard’s on Main, he is turning into retail space and luxury flats.

“I just thought it was the right timing with the city’s commitment with the streetscapes and farmers market,” Burke said of his decision.

Maxwell and Oregon avenues will welcome the Uptown Market early next year with construction already underway, adding another cornerstone to Uptown.

“You’re wanting to create a sense of place downtown where people want to be and invest,” Barrineau said. “You want to make it where investing, spending money in a building is not even questioned. All those amenities play a role in encouraging private investment.”

Uptown Manager Laura Ackerman said the cornerstones, along with the unique events, are bringing more people to Uptown.

“People are starting to see the big picture and joining in our effort,” she said. “Uptown Greenwood is continually growing. More and more people are coming to Uptown.”

Ackerman said the Uptown Greenwood Development Corporation established a loan pool to help with initial investment, which usually comes with a lower interest rate than other financing options.

What’s happening

The Textile Building will offer 15 luxury flats, which can be customized to the owner’s liking — “Anything you want,” Burke said.

Burke said the flats, which include the upper floors and the three units facing Main Street, will cost in the \$250,000-\$300,000 range and should hit the market soon.

The building has three retail spaces on the first floor, with two spaces already filled. Sugar Boutique moved from Waller Avenue and The Frilly Frog moved from the Barksdale Building, which is owned by Greenwood Mayor Welborn Adams, who is a real estate lawyer.

VOILA! Bridal & Formal, currently at 207 Waller Ave., is moving into Barksdale, which is at the corner of Main Street and Waller, to take The Frilly Frog’s location.

On the other side of Main Street, the Textile Building’s two bedroom, two-and-a-half bath

flats overlook a recently renovated Howard’s, which will welcome a new neighbor at 322 Main St. — Buenavista Cuban Cafe.

A block away at the corner of Main Street and Maxwell Avenue, renovations are underway on the Greenwood Building’s first floor for retail space, totaling a little more than 2,000 square feet.

On the other side of Uptown, another cornerstone was recently revived — the Inn on the Square — and is seeing some early success with booked meeting space and no vacancies during key weekends, such as Greenwood’s two festivals and golf tournaments.

What’s next

There are still vacant buildings Uptown waiting for new life, including properties along Main Street and Maxwell and Waller avenues.

The city purchased the vacant building next to The Museum, referred to as the Pals Building, in 2008 to protect the work that was underway at The Museum, Greenwood Community Theatre and Arts Center, Barrineau said. The Pals building and The Museum share a wall.

The city is looking for the right tenant, but has no timetable for the building, Barrineau said, adding that it could become a theater expansion or a new studio.

Two bank-affiliated properties sit empty near the city’s next streetscape project on Riley and Magnolia avenues — the old Bank of America building and the first floor of Countybank’s building next to the bank.

Countybank’s building next to the bank on the plaza sat empty along Court Avenue before being renovated to house the executive offices on the second floor a few years ago.

Bill Jenkins, vice president of marketing at Countybank, said they plan to use the first-floor space as the company continues to grow, however there are no immediate plans for development.

Near the courthouse, an office building at 120 Court was recently renovated in anticipation of potential growth in the area.

The SC Works Center’s former location off Monument Avenue is also available after the employment agency moved to the GLEAMNS Human Resources complex.

Ackerman said the UGDC’s goal is to continue to fill stores and market existing ones to bring people into the shops.

Efforts are also underway to promote what Ackerman calls a hidden charm in Waller Avenue, tucked off the main drag and featuring historic brick streets. She said Christmas lights will be hung year round to draw people to that area of Uptown.

BENEFITS

Continued from 1A

requirements will generally receive in-state tuition.

A lawsuit was filed June 8 on behalf of those students by the Southern Poverty Law Center and the S.C. Appleseed Legal Justice Center, which is suing the executive director and members of the Commission on Higher Education, in their official capacity, Glenn McConnell, president of the College of Charleston, and Mary Thornley, president of Trident Technical College.

Michelle Lapointe, an attorney on the case for SPLC, said the Commission on Higher Education regulates the policies that all higher education schools in South Carolina are required to follow.

“They’re bound by the rules set by the Commission on Higher Education, and not just the public colleges and universities, (but also) the private ones if they’re awarding the scholarships,” Lapointe said.

College of Charleston and Trident Technical College are two schools that classified the main plaintiffs in the lawsuit, Antonio Rojas Rodriguez and Alan Velasquez, as “non-residents” even though they were born in the United States and have lived in South Carolina for many years — denying them in-state tuition and scholarships.

“The only difference between the plaintiffs and the students awarded in-state tuition, state merit scholarships and need-based aid is that the plaintiffs cannot prove their parents are U.S. citizens or have certain specified immigration statuses,” the lawsuit stated.

Once the lawsuit was filed, Lapointe said the Commission on Higher Education issued a statement Oct. 1 that only partially solves the problem.

The statement said the Commission’s policy says students are only “presumed” to have the same residency status as their parents or guardians and continued to say students could refute the “presumption” by providing evidence that they are entitled to in-state residency.

Unfortunately for many students, this does not require colleges to accept them as in-state residents. “The residency deci-

sion reached by the college or university shall be final,” the statement went on to say. “There is no appeals process by which the Commission will review and reverse or modify the residency decision reached by the college or university.”

Lapointe said this clarification by the Commission is only a short-term fix, and the SPLC will be looking for a long-term policy to provide a more permanent solution for the students.

“It’s basically telling the schools, ‘You have the flexibility now to not do something that’s unconstitutional,’ whereas before they were bound by the way the regulations read,” Lapointe said. “We would be looking for longer term relief that’s enforceable for students down the road, because this is just a policy that could be changed at any time.”

About 170 children of undocumented immigrants who were born in the U.S. will enroll in a college each year in South Carolina, Lapointe said, and South Carolina is the only state the SPLC knows of that is still treating students born in the U.S. to undocumented immigrants as non-residents.

Greenwood student affected by SC policy

The issue for Jacky was not in-state tuition since Converse is a private college, but the denial of her LIFE scholarship and tuition grants, which meant she would not be able to afford it.

“I tried to gather the money, but there was just no way; so I was just going to have to forego college,” Jacky said. “I discussed it with my parents and after reaching out to all sorts of extended family trying to borrow money, and once I realized it wasn’t going to happen, I decided to just work and save up money.”

Fortunately for Jacky and one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit, Cristal Carreno, Converse changed its policy after the lawsuit was filed to allow the students to prove their residency.

Since then, Jacky said she’s realized the struggle to prove she was born in South Carolina has made her see the world differently.

The idea that she would be treated differently because of her parents’ residency never previously crossed her mind.

“I never took that into consideration because I didn’t think it would be a problem,” Jacky said. “I felt like I was being singled out for something that was out of my control.”

Lapointe said it is unconstitutional for colleges to deny students benefits they should receive as U.S. citizens, and in the case of Jacky and the plaintiffs, they were being denied those benefits

because their parents would not qualify for them.

“They were just saying, ‘You’re not eligible because your parent wouldn’t be eligible on their own if they were, themselves, applying,’” Lapointe said.

Even though Jacky and Carreno were able to receive their scholarships and grants, Jacky said she wants to make sure every U.S. citizen receives equal treatment.

“After finding out about my own situation, I kind of asked around to some of my peers, and I found out about other students who are going through the same problem, but for their parents’ safety, they’ve just decided to forego college and just go straight to work,” Jacky said. “The only way this can be fixed or made better is for the state to change their policy; even though Converse has changed their own policy, it’s going to continue to happen in other schools.”



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