



OFF AND RUNNING

Lake City baseball team steals its way to top of Region 5-3A

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N'VASION OF ROCK

Music tour brings inspiration, awareness to Pee Dee



Morning News

Friday, April 11, 2008

Today's Weather

Very warm with partial sunshine, high 84, low 62

DETAILS 2A

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Air travel headaches

As regulators take tougher stance on safety, air travelers likely to face more disruptions

By Dan Caterinicchia
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The air travel misery will probably get worse.

Massive flight cancellations by American Airlines are likely to spread to other carriers as federal regulators step up their scrutiny of aircraft inspections

after years of more lenient enforcement.

And as oversight tightens and Congress puts its glare on the airlines, passengers are paying the price.

Flying on U.S. airlines has never been safer. But mutual trust between the Federal Aviation Administration and carriers was undermined by last

month's revelation that Southwest Airlines flew planes that had missed inspections — a violation of federal standards.

Since then, the FAA has played hardball — auditing carriers' maintenance records and promising a less cozy relationship with the industry. And the airlines only have to look at Southwest's \$10.2 million fine to recognize the cooperative spirit might be over.

"There's always going to be extremes, just as there are in

politics, and to some extent this is a political issue," said Bob Harrell of New York-based travel and aviation consulting firm Harrell Associates.

The broken trust between airlines and regulators has created scheduling misery for the flying public.

And as scrutiny of safety procedures rises, flight delays and cancellations could soon get worse, particularly for carriers with older fleets, Harrell said.



AP/LM OTERO

American Airlines CEO Gerard Arpey speaks to reporters Thursday during a news conference in Fort Worth, Texas. He says flight cancellations this week will cost the airline tens of millions of dollars.

Bronze eagle prepares to take flight

Artist creates statue for veterans park entrance

By Mackenzie Taylor
WBTV News 13
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FLORENCE

For the past two months, Alex Palkovich has been working on a sculpture of the eagle that will perch atop three granite pillars at the entrance of the Veterans Memorial Park in Florence.

The Veterans Memorial Park, which will include an amphitheater, a Wall of Honor, benches, trees and other landscaping, is on a site off Woody Jones Boulevard. It will tie into the city's trail system via a crosswalk over the boulevard.

The park, which is under construction, will be adjacent to Florence Civic Center. Officials said they hope the park will be open by early summer.

"Honestly, (I'm) very proud to have such a project, and knowing where it is going for Veterans Park, it really makes me extremely happy," Palkovich said.

The eagle sculpture is 6 feet tall and has a span of about 8 feet. A light will illuminate the eagle at night.

Each of the granite pillars will be 24 feet tall, making the height of the monument 30 feet.

The sides of the pillars will represent six different branches of the service.

The plans for a memorial obelisk at the park have transformed into a towering monument with six sides — one for each branch of the military — as well as a bronze eagle statue at the top and a roughly 4-



STAFF/JOHN D. RUSSELL

Alex Palkovich is a Florence artist and sculptor who is creating the bald eagle that will sit atop the columns at the new Veterans Memorial Park being constructed. The eagle, shown here, has an 8-foot wingspan. After it's bronzed, it will sit atop three 24-foot columns. Palkovich said he expects the sculpture will take about another two months to complete. After that, several different molds and processes must take place before the eagle is sent to Colorado to be cast in bronze.

SCULPTURE STATS

- The eagle is about 6 feet tall, and has a wingspan of about 8 feet.
- The granite pillars will be 24 feet, making the monument 30 feet tall.

- Palkovich says he expects the sculpture will take another two months to complete.
- The six sides of the memorial obelisk will represent each branch of the military.

foot-wide open space in the middle. Officials said several granite seating cubes will be scattered around the monument so visitors

can pause and reflect on them. "But when they go to the chamber of this meditation chamber and they look up 30 feet and the eagle is

just landing on them, it will be a special feeling," Palkovich said. Palkovich said he expects the sculpture will take about another two months to complete. After that, several different molds and processes must take place before the eagle is sent to Colorado to be cast in bronze.

Palkovich said he hopes everything will be finished by early November.

"You want to be sure that you

(have) done the very maximum that you can do," he said. "It's obvious. It's not a painting. I can't come tomorrow with a brush and change something."

The initiative for the park began in 2003, when Florence Mayor Frank Willis led a meeting attended by local veterans.

Construction began in mid-November, and the park is scheduled

See EAGLE, 6A

Jetport commission addresses regulations

By Candace Jarrett
Morning News
cjarrett@florencenews.com

DARLINGTON — If you fly into Darlington County Jetport at night, you have almost all the lights needed to safely land.

At Thursday night's jetport commission meeting, commissioners discussed some issues that have been fixed since the S.C. Division of Aeronautics (DOA) wrote a letter to the county addressed to county council chairman Billy Bald-

win about the "council's lack of promoting and providing a safe airport to the traveling public."

The letter included more than 14 deficiencies in ownership practices, grant assurance practices and regulations at the jetport. Seven of the deficiencies were safety related and included two that have been corrected since county officials met with DOA on March 21.

The parallel taxiway lights were fixed this week after being out for at least six

See JETPORT, 6A

Residents petition county about road fee

By Charles Tomlinson
Morning News
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FLORENCE — Attorneys are reviewing a petition with 11,000 Florence County residents' signatures in favor of cutting the county's \$30 road maintenance fee in half.

"County council needs to address this mandate from the public as soon as possible," said Licia Stone, chairwoman of Florence County Citizens in Action, a



■ To share your thoughts on the petition, visit our Web site:

www.scnw.com

watchdog group whose volunteers gathered signatures for the petition.

The petition was submitted three weeks ago, but hasn't been acknowledged or discussed in open session by county council, Stone said.

State law says that a petition signed by 15 percent of

the electorate, if not acted upon by county council, could lead to a referendum on the issue in question.

The signatures on the petition represent more than 16 percent of Florence County's 67,855 registered voters, according to the S.C. State Election Commission.

Residents are upset because part of the fee, which doubled in 2003, goes into a separate Road System Maintenance Fund for each of the nine county councilmen, and those funds have accumulated more than \$1 million, Stone said.

Florence County Adminis-

trator Richard Starks said the county allocates 14 percent of the fees toward the funds, which can be used only to pave and provide rock for roads.

Florence County Treasurer Dean Fowler said the fee is larger than the taxes due on many older cars. Citizens in Action member Bill Hoffmeyer said he has paid the \$30 fee and only \$10 in taxes on a 1986 Chevrolet El Camino.

Several counties put such a fee in place with the idea that it would be an "equitable addition" because an old vehicle with a \$10 tax bill does as

See PETITION, 6A

GUARD RETURNS



Families prepare festivities for soldiers' homecoming

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