House drilling panel report calls for more debate

By Charles Swenson

A state House committee that spent four months collecting information about offshore oil and gas exploration and drilling couldn’t reach a decision on the topic, so it is recommending further debate, according to a report mailed last week.

“We were never asked to make a decision,” state Rep. Liz Hewitt said. The House’s Inlet Re-sources Committee was the only rep- resentative from the coast on the Offshore Drilling Ad Hoc Commit-tee. “I take it the chairman made this decision.”

The U.S. Department of In-terior is reviewing public com-ments on a draft leasing plan for areas of the Outer Continental Shelf. Leasing for exploration and drilling could begin off the South Carolina coast as early as 2020 under the proposal.

Hewitt wasn’t aware of the re-port until provided with a copy from a reporter. It was found online and circulated last week by members of the group Stop Offshore Drilling in the Atlantic (SOUDA).

“The chair of the full agricult-ural committee is from Pickens and is pro-drilling,” said Jean-Ma-xine Niel, a member of the SOUDA leadership. “He recognized that the votes were not there to force a decision. The ad hoc committee vote appeared to be against both testing and drilling.”

Hewitt spoke this week with Rep. David Hutto, the Pickens Republican who chairs the Agri-culture, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Commit-tee, and was told that the full committee will take up the resolu-tions next month, one for and one against offshore drilling. “We’re not going to take them up individu-ally,” Hewitt said. The committee’s SEE “OIL,” Page 3

Soft skills share the stage with hardware

By Emily Topper

The laptop charging stations were full as students rushed to and from cafeteria tables at Wac-camaw Intermediate School, es-pect to show off their projects in the school district’s annual tech-nology fair.

Students from schools across the district combined soft pre-sents and technology to produce projects that ranged from robots to books to presentation skills with digital tech-nology.

The district combined soft pre-sents and technology to produce projects that ranged from robots to books to presentation skills with digital tech-nology. “There are two places where we’re going to put them up,” Town Administrator Ryan Fabbri said. One is at the triangle on the south end where Doyle Avenue splits off from Myrtle Avenue.

“You can’t see a foot in front of you, if you don’t see it coming, could be an issue.”

The other location is on the north end near the intersection of Atlantic Avenue and Tyler Drive. “They aren’t designed with the beachfront, where outdoor light-ing is restricted by town ordi-nance because it interferes with sea turtle hatchlings. And the lights will be on keeping with the character of the island,” Fabbri said.

“We’ll create a little bit of light if you’re walking at night,” he said.

When power poles come down, two light poles will go up

By Charles Swenson

By Memorial Day, the power poles on Pawleys Island will come down, completing a five-year utility project. But two new poles will go up as the town switches on its first street lights.

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