

The Beaufort Gazette

Sheriff's office responds to report of sexual assault

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The Beaufort County Sheriff's Office responded to a reported sexual assault involving a victim who resides on the University of South Carolina Beaufort campus in Bluffton.

Officials stated that the assault did not take place on the USCB campus.

The incident occurred in Savannah on Dec. 7, according to Master Sgt. Robert Herlong. The Savannah Police Department is the primary investigative agency, as the alleged assault did not occur in Beaufort County.

BCSO became involved after the victim sought medical treatment at Coastal Carolina Hospital, where a medical professional contacted law enforcement.

The victim resides on campus, Sgt.

Seth Reynells said, but it is unclear whether the individual is currently a student or previously enrolled at USCB.

The investigation remains active, and no suspects have been identified at this time.

USCB's fall 2025 semester ended on Dec. 17, and the spring 2026 semester is scheduled to begin Jan. 12.

Sheriff's office says arrest made in Target parking lot stabbing

BY LI KHAN
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A man has been arrested in relation to a stabbing that occurred Saturday in the parking lot of the Bluffton Target. Ramiro Arcos-Romero, 19, of Ridgeland was arrested Sunday by the Jasper County Sheriff's Office and transported to their detention center. The Beaufort County Sheriff's Office has charged Arcos-Romero with attempted murder and possession of a weapon during commission of a violent crime.

At about 6:12 p.m. on Saturday, the Beaufort County 911 Communications Center received a call about a stabbing in the store parking lot.

Deputies arrived and located a 17-year-old juvenile suffering from stab wounds.

According to the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office, the victim had been involved in a fight with another juvenile male. Another person, later identified as Arcos-Romero, "retrieved a sharp object and stabbed the victim."

The subjects then "fled the scene," police said in a statement.

Dogs rescued from porch in Hilton Head house fire

BY CHLOE APPLEBY
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A ladder left in the backyard of the Hilton Head home that caught on fire was key to saving the pets trapped on an elevated back porch, according to a police report.

Just hours after a vehicle smashed into the front of delisheeyo, a vegetarian restaurant owned by Blake and Maddie Wearren, the couple's home on Marshland Road suffered "very extensive damage" from a fire. Eventually, fire crews declared the home a "total loss."

Police ruled there was no connection between the series of events that rocked the Wearren family on Dec. 21, just days before Christmas. And if it wasn't for a ladder being left in the yard instead of the garage, the family's three pets might not have survived.

HOW THE DOGS WERE RESCUED FROM THE FIRE

Just before 11 a.m., a deputy noticed smoke rising while sitting in a patrol vehicle near the intersection of Marshland Road and Leg O Mutton Road.

When coming around the corner, the officer saw smoke coming from the top floor windows and requested backup. The officer climbed the set of stairs on the side of the house to what they assumed was the front door. Eventually, after yelling to see if anyone was inside, the officer opened the door only to see a billowing cloud of black smoke.

SEE DOGS, 3A



JINGDA CHEN Unsplash

Where to find New Year's Eve fireworks and celebrations in Hilton Head and Beaufort.

New Year's guide: fireworks, events, restaurants

BY ANNA CLAIRE MILLER
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Ready to ring in 2026?

Residents and holiday visitors across the Lowcountry will have several chances to celebrate the New Year with events, ball drops, dinners and waterfront fireworks on New Year's Eve.

From Hilton Head Island to downtown Beaufort, communities are offering family-friendly events to welcome the year ahead.

Here's a running list of New Year's Eve and New Year's Day festivities taking place across Beaufort County:

HILTON HEAD ISLAND

HARBOUR TOWN BALL DROP

One of the area's most popular New Year's Eve celebrations, Harbour Town's New Year's Eve Ball Drop.

Taking place at 149 Lighthouse Road, this event features entertainment, food and music. To celebrate the start of 2026, an illuminated ball will drop twice — once at 7 p.m. for families with younger children and again at midnight to welcome the New Year. The \$9 Sea Pines gate fee is needed for entry.



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The Harbour Town Lighthouse was the scene of the New Year's Eve ball drop on Sunday night. Two drops were held, one at 7 p.m. and another at midnight.

In addition to the onshore festivities, guests can celebrate from the water aboard the New Year's Eve Dinner Cruise with Vagabond Cruise. The cruise runs from 5 to 7 p.m. and departs from the Harbour Town Yacht Basin. Dinner is included and reservations are required. Tickets are \$109 for adults and \$70 for children aged 3 to 12.

SEE EVENTS, 3A



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