

IceCats ready to
take momentum
into SPHL

PAGE B1



Post 1's Urquhart
part of Hall of
Fame class

PAGE B1



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CATFISH UNDER STRESS



EMMY RIBERO PHOTOS/STAFF

Fishermen on the Great Pee Dee River are reporting that catfish are sick, resulting in the closing of their business.

Pee Dee fishermen struggle as illness hits more fish

EMMY RIBERO
Staff Writer

JOHNSONVILLE — Johnsonville fisherman and businessman Randy Stone said he started noticing problems with the catfish in the Pee Dee River about three years ago. It started with about 1% to 2% of the catch. Now, according to S.C. Stone, who works with Randy, about 30% of the catch is affected. And that led to the closure of

the business. When a catfish is sick, which is identifiable in many ways, including a visible spine, it is thrown back. In just about an hour of fishing, S.C. threw back 63 fish. Randy calls that throwing back his profit. When he does not catch enough fish, the cost of getting out on the river and cleaning the fish is too high, he said. “So the overpopulation and lack of food is a big problem, and

then the bacteria on top of that,” S.C. said. “You know, when you starve something out, its immune system weakens too. So the bacteria affect them worse because of them being malnourished.” Randy sent one of the fish he caught to Auburn University to be tested. The results came back showing the fish had Aeromonas, a group of bacteria widespread throughout freshwater systems

Please see **CATFISH**, Page A7

Pee Dee River fishermen have raised concerns about the health of the river's catfish population.



Florence 1 schools advance

FLORENCE 1 SCHOOLS

FLORENCE — Florence 1 Schools continue to see gains in student achievement, according to the newest state report cards issued by the South Carolina Department of Education. Five schools in Florence 1 improved their overall report card rating for the 2025-2026 school year. Briggs, Dewey L. Carter, and Timrod Elementary

Schools all moved from an Average rating to Good. Royall Elementary School earned an Excellent rating after being rated Good the previous year, as did South Florence for the first time in the school's history. Students in grades three through five showed improvements on SC READY English language arts. Third-grade students recorded the greatest growth among the district's elementary grades, with 69 percent meeting or exceeding expectations, outperforming the state. District-wide, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations increased in ELA. The schools with the largest gains were Lester and Royall Elementary Schools, each with a seven-percentage-point increase; North Vista Elementary School, with a

Please see **FLORENCE 1**, Page A7

Darlington school report cards improve

EMMY RIBERO
Staff Writer

DARLINGTON — Darlington County School District schools showed improvement on the 2026 S.C. School Report Cards, with more schools earning higher ratings and students showing stronger academic growth. Ten of the 15 schools in the district received report cards rated Good or Excellent, which is up from four schools last year. Fourteen schools maintained or improved their overall ratings. DCSD students also demonstrated academic growth above the state average, both overall and among students who began the year furthest behind.

Please see **REPORT CARDS**, Page A7

Bicyclist, SCHP vehicle collide in Mullins

Florence County sheriff investigating

SPECIAL TO THE MORNING NEWS

A bicyclist was transported to a hospital following a collision with a South Carolina Highway Patrol vehicle in Mullins. The Florence County Sheriff's Office

is investigating. The collision occurred at 7:20 p.m. Monday at the intersection of U.S. Highway 76 and Stalvey Street, according to the sheriff's office. The operator of the bicycle was transported to an area hospital for treatment. The sheriff's office says no additional

information on the condition of this person is available at this time. The incident remains under investigation. State law calls for motor vehicle incidents involving a state trooper to be investigated by the sheriff of the county in which the incident occurred, according to

the sheriff's office. In this particular case, the Marion County sheriff has requested that the investigation be conducted by the Florence County Sheriff's Office. Contact the writer: gene.crider@lee.net or 803-533-5570.

Strange light seen across SC was SpaceX rocket

PAGE A2

Inside

Nation/world	A5	Weather	A8
Opinion	A6	Sports	B1

Weather

Very warm
High: 91
Low: 61
Forecast: A8

