T&D

The Times and Democrat

Sophomore keys Final Four run

PAGE B1

Several file to unseat Graham

PAGE A3

WHERE **YOUR STORY** LIVES

Thursday, April 2, 2026

Orangeburg, South Carolina • TheTandD.com

ORANGEBURG COUNTY COUNCIL

Chairman not seeking re-election

Wright has led council for 17 years

GENE ZALESKI
T&D Staff Writer

Orangeburg County's governing body will have a new leader at its helm for the first time in 17 years.

County Council District 1 Chairman Johnnie Wright did not file for re-election by the close of the two-week election filing period Monday afternoon.

Wright has served on Orangeburg County Council for 32 years and as chairman for 17 years.

Wright

"I have always decided everything has an end date," Wright said. "I have given a lot of time and I was always committed to Orangeburg County and my community when it comes to being on the board."

"I always tried to be fair regardless of race, color or creed," Wright continued. "I have always given people the opportunity to speak and always followed up with people. I tried to be as fair as I can be."

Wright said after over three decades of service, it's the right time to leave.

"I would like to come off in my right mind mentally and physically," Wright said. "I love Orangeburg County. I would like to feel I made a difference the time I was on the board."

Wright said he was thinking about not seeking reelection "for a minute."

"The last time I ran, I was thinking about it," Wright said. "I was asked to give it one more shot and I did."

He said he has been asked by some to run again but said this time he chose not to.

"Sometimes you've got to know when to quit," Wright said.

Wright said his goal is to continue to serve for the remaining nine months of 2026 on "his good record" of fairness and ethical leadership.

Please see **WRIGHT,** Page A5

LEAP INTO FUN

T&D CORRESPONDENT YON LINE

The Springfield Frog Jump and Egg Strike returns this weekend.

Springfield celebrates 60 years of hopping frogs

MARTHA ROSE BROWN
T&D Staff Writer

Hop over to the 60th Annual Governor's Frog Jump and International Egg Strike festival taking place Thursday through Saturday, April 2-4, in Springfield.

The family-filled event features food vendors, fun, entertainment and time-held traditions for all ages.

Festival events get underway on Thursday at 7 p.m. with Bingo at the Hattie Wood Senior Center. Cash prizes will be awarded for first, second and third place winners.

Food and drinks will be available to purchase outside.

On Friday evening, carnival activities and other events will start.

Carnival rides and games will operate from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Don't miss out on the cornhole tournament and cow drop at 6 p.m. too.

From 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., DJs Danny and Rhonda Boltin will provide music at the gazebo.

The curfew is at 10 p.m.

Saturday's schedule gets started at 9 a.m. when the arts and crafts and garden club's country store opens. The country store closes at 2 p.m.

Please see **FROGS,** Page A5

Candidates file, face challengers

GENE ZALESKI
T&D Staff Writer

Filing for the 2026 primary and general elections ended Monday.

The party primaries will be held June 9. The General Election will be Nov. 3.

Here is a look at who will be on the ballot in Orangeburg, Calhoun and Bamberg counties. Statewide races are not included.

Orangeburg County

County Council, District 1

• R.L. Poppy Brown, Democrat. Veteran Orangeburg County Council Chairman Johnnie Wright did not seek re-election.

County Council, District 6

• Deloris Frazier, Democrat
• David Thornburg, Republican

County Council, District 7

• Latisha Walker, Democrat

Probate Judge

• Pandora Jones-Glover< Democrat

Auditor

• Audrey Asbury, Democrat

Treasurer

• Matt Stokes, Democrat

Calhoun County

County Council, District 3

• Rebecca Bonnette, Republican
• Christian Wolfe, Republican

County Council District 4

• Cecil Thornton Jr., Democrat
• Aaron Troutman, Republican

County Council, District 5

• James Haigler, Democrat
• Tris Waystack, Republican

Bamberg County

County Council, District 2

• Tony Marsharell Duncan, Democrat
• Martin Ryant III, Democrat
• Andrea Blume Rahn, Republican

District 2 Councilwoman Sharon Hammond chose not to seek re-election. Hammond has been on Council since 2016.

Please see **CANDIDATES,** Page A5

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Man accused of kidnapping 15-year-olds

Teen chewed through tape, escaped

MARTHA ROSE BROWN
T&D Staff Writer

A man is accused of kidnapping two 15-year-old females and taking them to rural Calhoun County to kill them.

The teens managed to escape after one of them chewed through the tape covering her mouth.

Gilmore

Darrius Latrell Gilmore, 21, of Columbia is charged with:

• Two counts of kidnapping
• Two counts of attempted murder
• Two counts of possession of a weapon during the commission of a violent crime
• One count of discharging a firearm into an occupied vehicle

The incident occurred early Saturday morning, Calhoun County Sheriff's Office Chief Deputy Matt Trentham said during a press

Please see **KIDNAPPING,** Page A5

Deaths • A9

• Betty Scott Kilgus -- Bamberg

Inside

Nation/World	A6
Obituaries	A9
Opinion	A7
Sports	B1
Weather	A10

Weather

A thunderstorm around
High 84
Low 62
Forecast • A10

COMMUNITY OF CHARACTER
ADAPTABILITY

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