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Thursday, July 9, 2026

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## BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL

# Comer appeals loss to S.C. Supreme Court

GENE ZALESKI  
T&D Staff Writer

Incumbent Bamberg County Councilman Evert Comer is appealing his failed election challenge to the South Carolina Supreme Court.

Comer lost the June 9 Democratic primary for his District 6 seat on Bamberg County Council. He appealed the loss to the South Carolina Democratic Party's

Executive Committee, which affirmed Mark Tyler's victory on June 22.

The SCDPEC affirmed the voting results by a 23-3 vote.

Comer filed the appeal on July 2.

Comer lost to Tyler 131 to 105, but neither Comer's nor Tyler's names were printed on the ballots used in the Govan precinct.

Voting was halted in the precinct until

the error was resolved.

The polling site reopened with paper ballots including Comer's and Tyler's names. One official document identified a set of voters as residing in County Council District 6, while another official document identified the same voters as residing in District 5.

It was estimated 17 people received ballots without Tyler's or Comer's name,

though Comer has questioned how many voters were turned away while the polls were shut down on Election Day and never returned.

In his appeal, Comer said the irregularities created a cloud over the election.

"The election should be voided and a new one ordered with assurances it would

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# PLANNING FOR A PARK



GENE ZALESKI, T&D

Orangeburg County will purchase about 32 acres of land on Cannon Bridge Road near Chicquita Street for a public recreational park. The property purchase – an estimated \$128,000 – will be funded through capital project sales tax monies. The park will feature a softball field, gazebo, walking trail, playground, basketball court and restrooms. The park is currently in the design phase though hope is that construction will begin by the end of the year.

## Orangeburg County to buy Cordova land

GENE ZALESKI  
T&D Staff Writer

Orangeburg County will purchase about 32 acres of land on Cannon Bridge Road in the Cordova area to build a new public park.

Orangeburg County Council unanimously gave first reading to spending about \$4,000 per acre, or \$128,000, to buy about 32 acres of land near Cannon Bridge Road and Chicquita Street. The vote was taken during a special called County Council meeting June 29.

The property will be purchased with capital project sales tax money.

In the fall of 2025, the county purchased about eight acres of the same property for about \$80,000.

"The seller now wants to sell the balance of the property," Orangeburg County Administrator Harold Young said. "We feel like it will be good to be able to expand that park in the future and to be able to control what would be next to it."

The park will feature a softball field, gazebo, walking trail,

playground, basketball court and restrooms.

The park project will also be funded with proceeds from the 1 percent capital projects sales tax.

The project is currently in the design phase, though construction is expected to begin by the end of the year.

Contact the writer: gzaleski@timesanddemocrat.com or 803-533-5551. Check out Zaleski on Twitter at @ZaleskiTD.

## SCSU alum to lead OCSD food services

T&D STAFF REPORTS

Alneisha Lakin has been appointed as the Orangeburg County School District's new coordinator of food services.

Most recently, Lakin served as director of food and nutrition for The Nutrition Group, where she led school-based food service operations, directed menu planning in compliance with USDA and state nutrition standards, managed budgets and inventory controls, supervised staff and collaborated with school district leaders and vendors to deliver high-quality nutrition programs.



Lakin

Prior to that role, she served as a program coordinator with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control and as health and nutrition manager for CDI Head Start serving Charleston County.

Lakin's experience also includes serving as school nutrition site support manager for Bibb County School District in Georgia, where she supervised school nutrition managers, supported meal service operations across multiple schools, ensured compliance with federal and state regulations and participated in bid development and product evaluations.

A graduate of South Carolina State University, Lakin earned a bachelor's degree in nutrition and dietetics and holds a ServSafe Food Manager Certification.

"Providing nutritious meals is essential to student success," said Dr. Shawn D. Foster, superintendent of Orangeburg County School District. "Ms. Lakin's extensive experience in school nutrition management, public health, compliance and operational leadership makes her exceptionally well-prepared to lead our Food Services Department."

"We are excited to welcome her to the OCSD family and look forward to the positive impact she will have on our students, schools and community."

The district's Food Services Department now reports to the Office of Finance under the leadership of Gail Sanders, assistant superintendent for finance.

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## Man accused in AI child abuse material case

MARTHA ROSE BROWN  
T&D Staff Writer

An Orangeburg man accused of possessing sexually explicit videos of young girls faces two additional charges related to artificial intelligence-generated child sexual abuse material.

The South Carolina Attorney General's Office charged David Austin Robert Gillespie, 37, of



Gillespie

Timberline Drive, with two counts of second-degree sexual exploitation of a minor.

Gillespie is accused of using an image of an 8-year-old girl to create sexually explicit videos with artificial

intelligence software.

Gillespie turned himself in at the Orangeburg County Detention Center on July 6.

Gillespie, a registered sex offender, was already out on bond after his May arrest on five counts of second-degree sexual exploitation of a minor and one count of

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### Weather

Sunny  
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**Low:** 77  
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