



EDITORIAL: The outlook is bright for city, county

Posted: Friday, March 18, 2016

Thumbs up to the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce for the Outlook Luncheon that it held Wednesday at the Florence Civic Center. What a great time and place for civic leaders and business pillars to gather and hear about the state of the city and county.

Thumbs up to Florence Mayor Stephen J. Wukela, who hit a grand slam home run with a speech that harped on harmony. What an important message he delivered. What great timing, coming two days after a city council meeting that was filled with racial talk and tension. Councilman Ed Robinson picked on “the two other people on this council who look like me.” We’re tired of his ridiculous rhetoric. Fortunately, his noise isn’t getting in the way of the city’s progress, which Wukela highlighted well.

Thumbs up to Florence County Council Chairman Roger Poston. We get the feeling that public speaking isn’t his favorite task, but he did quite well at the podium. It was good to hear his voice. He mixed a little humor well with good information. He talked about how much has been accomplished with the pennies that have come from two Capital Project Sales Taxes. He talked about well the council works together. He talked about how the council wants to consider two plans to solve a parking problem downtown. We’d prefer to see a second deck, and that should not be dependent on state funding.

Thumbs up to Regi Armstrong, who was honored as the 2016 Small Business Person of the Year. He founded Armstrong Wealth Management Group in 2002. In the first few months, he paid his staff from his retirement savings while taking no salary himself. Armstrong is a man of strong faith who believes in giving back to the community. Two percent of his company’s gross revenues go to charitable organizations. He was a fine choice for the chamber’s annual award.

Thumbs up to the Obama administration for deciding Tuesday that it will bar oil drilling off the United States’ Atlantic Coast. The decision was a major reversal, and it was hailed by the South Carolina Small Business Chamber of Commerce. It lauded the efforts of volunteer grassroots organizations, local coastal governments and far more than 400 South Carolina small businesses to protect the state’s tourism economy. “Risking South Carolina’s over 80,000 tourism, fishing and recreation jobs that contribute over \$7 billion annually to our economy would have been a terrible business decision for our state,” said Frank Knapp Jr., president and CEO of the South Carolina Small Business Chamber of Commerce. “Offshore drilling is a dirty business guaranteed to put oil on our beaches. The industry is incompatible with our healthy ocean, magnificent beaches and thriving small business communities. Today is truly a great day in South Carolina.” But not everybody was celebrating. “Today’s announcement by the Obama Administration to cancel plans for potential offshore exploration in the Atlantic and 50 miles off

South Carolina's coast is just another blow to our state's small towns and communities that continue to struggle with disproportionate high minority unemployment compared to the rest of the state and nation," said Stephen Gilchrist, president of the South Carolina African American Chamber of Commerce. "Instead of creating high wage, year round local jobs in some of the coastal areas that need them the most, BOEM is allowing misinformation and fear tactics to slam the door on a developing portion of the American energy renaissance by stifling significant business development, job creation, economic growth and potential revenue that could be used for education and infrastructure improvements in some of our poorest communities in South Carolina."

Thumbs up to all who helped make Lighthouse Ministries' recent fundraiser a big success. That motion comes from Mindy Steinkruger, the board chair of Lighthouse Ministries. She wrote to offer "a big bushel of thumbs up to so many generous churches, individuals and businesses who supported Lighthouse Ministries BBQ on March 9th. It would take a bushel of paper to extend thanks to everyone who made our annual fundraiser a big success, but please accept our gratitude on behalf of those in our community who are trying to avoid eviction, keep the lights, heat and water on and climb out of recent crisis, including the fall floods. Your help makes a real difference for our struggling neighbors. The staff and volunteers of Lighthouse appreciate your concern and generosity for the 'least of these.'"

http://www.scnow.com/opinion/editorials/article_0a337d6c-ed77-11e5-92f6-230d560dde83.html