

Briefs

by John Temple Ligon

Trade

S.C. exports pump almost \$14 billion into the state economy annually, supporting employment and generating billions in state and local taxes. Only the state of Washington has a higher percentage of export jobs supported by manufacturing. The state's big-dollar exports include vehicles, rubber products, and electrical machinery.

Post-combat clean-up

The S.C. Research Authority recently won a \$1.6 million contract from the U.S. Army for program development and engineering expertise in the refurbishing of machines returning from battle. The **SCRA** and partners will develop laser scanning technology to look for undocumented parts and to test for combat damage to ensure that war vehicles are refurbished properly.

Raleigh branch

Columbia-based law firm Nexsen Pruet has announced a merger with Raleigh law firm Sanford Holshouser. Eponymous lawyer Holshouser is a former governor of N.C. In the Columbia home office, Mayor Bob Coble is a partner. Nexsen Pruet has more than 170 attorneys with offices in Columbia, Charleston, Greenville, Hilton Head, Myrtle Beach, Charlotte, Greensboro, and Raleigh.

Nuclear prep

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission published a notice Monday, January 5, to announce its intent to prepare an environmental impact statement on the two new nuclear reactors proposed by SCE&G, part of SCANA. Public meetings will be held on January 27 and 28 near the V.C. Summer reactor site in Fairfield County, which is also

the proposed site for the two new nuclear reactors.

Invest in the nuclear prep

Recently SCANA announced a new public offering of 2 million shares of common stock. That offering has been upped to 2.5 million shares at \$35.50 as of Friday, January 2.

Done deal

Charlotte-based Wachovia, S.C.'s largest bank by deposits and market share, on January 2 became absorbed into San Francisco-based Wells Fargo & Co. As of June 30, South Carolina had 152 Wachovia branch offices and \$11.69 billion in Wachovia deposits. Wells Fargo now has \$1.4 trillion in assets and almost 11,000 offices worldwide besides its presence on the Internet.

Charleston tourist business slacks off
 Charleston County hotel occupancy for November was about 60%, a drop of almost 9% from the same month in 2007. September was down almost 13%, and October, 11%.

New Year's Eve news

On December 31, 2008, S.C. Governor Mark Sanford signed off on a \$146 federal loan to ensure employment benefits at the S.C. Employment Security Commission. Had he waited another day or two, state benefit checks were not covered. But the same problem should surface again at the end of March when the federal loan amount is expected to run out. Sanford still wants a legislative audit of the S.C. Employment Security Commission to find ways to cut costs. Sanford suggests some unemployed South Carolinians might be taking advantage of the benefits program, and that can't be confirmed without an audit. S.C. House Speaker Bobby Harrell also called for the legislative audit.

