

Tega Cay Sun



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January 2026

Tega Cay City Council Special Election Meet the Candidates

Jim Foltz



To assist with your vote, we sent a questionnaire to all special election candidates. Below is a preview of their answers. This is only a portion of their response—to read the entire article, go to TegaCaySun.com.

Please state your occupation:
- Former board-certified physical

therapist and retired military officer (Lieutenant Colonel, US Air Force) - Currently employed as a Senior Business Accountability Specialist in financial services.

How long have you lived in Tega Cay? 4 years

What do you believe is the role of the City Council in our community?

City council plays a central role in governing the city and is responsible for guiding the strategic direction and shaping long-term plans, priorities and goals for the city. Council sets the policies, adopts ordinances (local laws), and passes resolutions that guide how the city operates. Resolutions are different from ordinances in that they are not laws but are used to approve administrative actions

such as adopting annual budgets, approving contracts, and making appointments to positions, such as city manager, municipal judge, and municipal attorney. City council must work closely with the city manager in our Council-Manager form of government, where the council sets policies and priorities, and the city manager executes the council's directives.

Most importantly, city council must be transparent and accountable to the residents of Tega Cay. Resident input is crucial to understanding community needs and is imperative in making informed and responsible decisions that have a direct impact on our financial sustainability, public safety, funding for essential services and infrastructure, and the overall quality of life in Tega Cay.

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Liz Duda



To assist with your vote, we sent a questionnaire to all special election candidates. Below is a preview of their answers. This is only a portion of their response—to read the entire article, go to TegaCaySun.com.

Please state your occupation:
I am a federal bank regulator with a long career in financial services, including community banking,

Wall Street, risk management consulting, and grant-giving to New York City businesses affected by the 9/11 attacks.

How long have you lived in Tega Cay?

My husband and I moved to Tega Cay 20 years ago to be near family and start our own. We've raised our three children here, who now attend Gold Hill Middle, Fort Mill High School, and college.

What do you believe is the role of the City Council in our community?

City Council exists to represent residents, set a shared community vision, and ensure the City is managed responsibly. Council provides oversight of the city manager, approves balanced operating and capital budgets, and makes policy decisions grounded in the City's Comprehensive Plan, strategic vision, and resident feedback. Council members also represents Tega Cay in regional

planning on issues like transportation and river/lake management.

What skills and experience do you have that you believe would be beneficial to you as a Council member?

As a Tega Cay Council member, I will advance the work I have been doing for nearly two decades — promoting accountability, strengthening community partnerships, and helping ensure Tega Cay remains a safe, healthy, and thriving place for you and your family to call home.

My key strengths include:
1. Local leadership experience: Over 20 years of civic involvement in Tega Cay, regionally and state-wide in areas critical to our community, developing a deep understanding of this community, and resulting in over 300 volunteer hours every year for our

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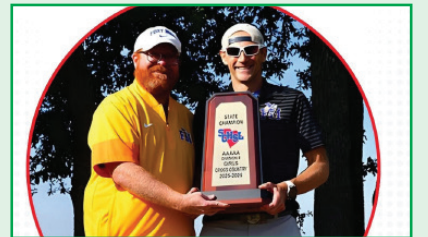
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Jim Foltz, From Page 1

What skills and experience do you have that you believe would be beneficial to you as a Council member?

My most valuable set of skills were developed and honed through 25+ years of experience as a leader in the military and in the private sector. I have a diverse professional background and have held numerous leadership positions throughout my career. I've managed multiple healthcare clinics, planned and executed large budgets, led strategic programs for the US Air Force Surgeon General's Office, built and managed an elite Human Performance Program for the Air Force Combat Control School, and I currently oversee multiple programs and manage financial risks for a Top 5 financial services company with a multi-billion-dollar annual budget.

I've been able to succeed in diverse industries by leveraging my ability to synthesize large amounts of information and data, through my ability to build strong networks and solid working relationships with key stakeholders and decision makers, and by taking the time to gather the information needed to formulate thoughtful and informed decisions that optimize performance and mitigate operational risks. I will bring to city council my extensive leadership experience and the skills I've developed over the course of my career to deliver results for the residents of Tega Cay.

What previous community involvement have you had in Tega Cay or another city?

I coached youth sports (softball and soccer) for several years and volunteered regularly as an elementary classroom literacy tutor in various communities while serving in the military. I actively support and volunteer for Moms for Liberty and Founding Fathers of York County, Disabled American

Veterans, Samaritans Purse, Second Harvest Food Bank, Habitat for Humanity and NFL Play60, which inspires children to live a healthy and active lifestyle. I have also served my community as an election Precinct Vice President, Precinct Chair, and was elected to the Wake County, NC, GOP Executive Committee.

What do you see as top priorities for the city and why?

My top priority is ensuring Tega Cay remains financially secure and sustainable over time. Remaining financially healthy is critical to preserving everything we love about Tega Cay and is essential to funding all our priorities as a city. This requires leadership that is committed to budgeting responsibly and carefully prioritizing spending. We must remain financially secure to fund our public works, stormwater system, maintain and repair our aging infrastructure, keep the city safe by providing critical equipment and resources to our police and fire departments, and revitalize our beautiful waterfront resources, parks, and trails.

Another top priority is to responsibly manage future growth of the city, which I discuss in further detail in one of my responses below. I'm very confident that I can bring my extensive financial management experience to the council and work effectively with the mayor and other council members to thoughtfully plan and execute responsible budgets that prioritize spending and reduce unnecessary expenditures, allowing us to effectively fund our critical services and resources while also limiting the tax burden on residents.

Have you previously served on a governing board of any type (business, government, non-profit organization, church, etc.) or as a leader in any organization? If so,

please briefly describe the organization(s), your role, and the number of years you served in that capacity below.

Leadership positions (limited to previous 15 years for brevity), governing boards and non-profit experience:

- Flight Commander, Physical Therapy and Radiology Departments, Dover Air Force Base, Delaware (3 years)
- o I managed clinical operations and budgets for 2 clinics and supervised 10 healthcare practitioners

- Clinical Medicine Flight Commander, 436th Medical Group, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama (3 years)
- o I managed clinical operations and budgets for 5 healthcare clinics and supervised 35 healthcare practitioners

- Deputy Commander, 436th Medical Operations Squadron, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama (3 years)

- o I served as the interim commander responsible for managing clinical operations and budgets for 7 healthcare clinics and supervising 70 healthcare practitioners and support staff

- Chief of Medical Doctrine and Joint Medical Capabilities, Air Force Medical Support Agency, Falls Church, Virginia, and the Pentagon (3 years)

- o I managed 3 operational programs providing direct support to the Air Force Surgeon General
- o I was responsible for certifying and publishing medical doctrine documentation providing authoritative guidance for the organization and deployment of all Air Force medical capabilities
- o Produced strategic military readiness reporting for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Read the rest of the article on Tegacaysun.com

TEGA CAY SUN

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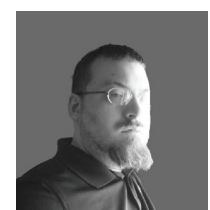
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RR TOP 500 CLASS OF 2025 AGENT

Liz Duda, From Page 1

community.
 2. Community building & Communications: Proven ability to bring people together, build community, communicate clearly, and bring awareness to local issues.
 3. Financial expertise: Extensive professional experience performing financial analysis, navigating regulatory documents, and simplifying complex topics for decision making.

What previous community involvement have you had in Tega Cay or another city?

I have been engaged in nearly every major community issue in Tega Cay over the past 20 years.

Highlights include:

Serving alongside other citizen leaders who successfully fought against a private utility company in Tega Cay that was mismanaged, uninterested in investing in our water/sewer infrastructure and responsible for devastating sewage spills – resulting in the City acquiring the system and improving service for all residents. Expanding age limits for flag football programming with Tega Cay Parks and Recreation after circulating a petition and increasing awareness. The ages allowed to play increased from age 7 to 13, allowing many more kids to participate in the sport. Launching the popular walk/bike/roll to school days when Tega Cay Elementary (TCES) first opened; founding the “Tega Cay Healthy Kids” platform to support a healthier lifestyle through community events, collaboration, and communications; and taking over the annual Catawba Riversweep Site Captain role at the Tega Cay Marina - all of which I continue today. Serving on the Tega Cay Health & Active Living Committee and partnering with regional healthy-community coalitions. After hearing teens speak at a City

Council meeting to request a place to be allowed to skate in 2020, forming an Advisory Board and helping the teens get permission to skate at the new Catawba Park amphitheater. Serving in the Tega Cay Lions Club, after receiving Citizen of the Year in 2018. Serving on the York County Mental Health Task Force after learning mental health calls are a major challenge facing Tega Cay law enforcement. Leading the Fort Mill High School Walkability Study which resulted in York County allocating funding for a new sidewalk. Routinely attending Council, County and transportation meetings to advocate for transparency, safety and responsible spending.

During my time in Tega Cay, while raising a family and working, I have dedicated a significant amount of time being responsive to community needs and tirelessly promoted safe pathways, healthy waterways, recreational opportunities, and community. These experiences have helped me build deep relationships with first responders, schools, nonprofits, county/state partners, and many residents.

What do you see as top priorities for the City and why?

I have had the privilege of engaging with our community, listening to feedback at community meetings and events, and advocating for issues our community cares about.

With this experience and knowledge, my top priorities for Tega Cay are:

1. Good Governance - Upholding accountability, integrity, transparency, and fiscal responsibility of City management and Council.
2. Responsible Development & Redevelopment - Having oversight

of current projects, while positioning the City for future redevelopment and long-term economic resilience. Tega Cay has doubled in size and population since I moved here, and we have limited ability to expand our jurisdiction in the future. We need to focus on what we have and value - protecting our people and natural resources, maintaining our small-town feel, encouraging high-quality (re) development that meets community needs, financial stability, and ensuring we can continue delivering quality services.
 3. Public Safety – Continuing to partner with police, fire, EMS, and mental health organizations to maintain Tega Cay’s reputation as one of the safest cities in South Carolina.
 4. Recreational Community - Supporting diverse recreational programs, safe sidewalks and pathways, and responsible stewardship of our lake, river, parks, and treescape.

Have you previously served on a governing board of any type (business, government, non-profit organization, church, etc.) or as a leader in any organization? If so, please briefly describe the organization(s), your role, and the number of years you served in that capacity below.

I have served in multiple local organizations, including:
 Tega Cay Lions Club: First Vice President (2022–23), Communications (2020–present)
 SC Women in Leadership: Board of Directors (2023-present), Vice President (now)
 Tega Cay Healthy Kids: Founder & Leader (2014–present)
 Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation: Riversweep Site Captain Covekeeper (2007–present)

Read the rest of the article on [Tegacaysun.com](https://tegacaysun.com)

UPCOMING EVENTS 2026

JAN 12TH

Planning Commission- will meet at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.

JAN 12TH

Storm Water Committee- will meet at 6:30pm in the Hearth Room.

JAN 26TH

City Council Meeting- at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.

JAN 26TH

Economic Development Commission- will meet at 7:00pm in the Council Chambers.

TUE. Weekly

Dr. Tom’s Trivia - 6:30pm at Model A Brewing..

THUR. Weekly

Bingo with Shane - 6:30pm at Model A Brewing..

WED-SAT. Weekly

Live Music - Live music four nights a week at the SC Shore Club

Saturdays Bi-Weekly

Tega Cay Lions Club - 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month, the Tega Cay Lions Club meets in the lower level of the Glennon Center. More information available at <https://tegacaylions.wixsite.com/tegacaylions>

Last WED. Monthly

Tega Cay Good Life Club - Meets the last Wednesday of each month at the Glennon Center. More information available at <https://tegoodlifeclub.wixsite.com/tcglc>

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Fort Mill Leads World Atlas List of South Carolina's "Most Hospitable" Retirement Towns
Thomas Hyslip, Editor



Retiring in South Carolina offers a blend of warm weather, Southern charm, and a slower pace of life that appeals to many. But for those seeking a community that truly feels like home, hospitality is key. According to a recent list by World Atlas, eight towns in the Palmetto State stand out for their welcoming atmosphere, neighborly spirit, and retiree-friendly amenities.

Leading the pack with a perfect mix of small-town feel and big-city convenience is Fort Mill.

The "Neat and Pleasant" Gateway to the Carolinas

Top on the list is Fort Mill, a town that World Atlas describes as "straight out of a movie." Located just over 20 minutes from Charlotte, North Carolina, Fort Mill offers retirees the best of both worlds: a laid-back, hospitable community with "earshot" access to metropolitan amenities like an international airport and major league sports.

Why It stands Out for Retirees:

Outdoor Adventures: The crown jewel of Fort Mill's outdoor scene is the Anne Springs Close Greenway, a massive nature preserve boasting over 30 miles of trails. For those who prefer the water, the 28-acre Lake Haigler offers a serene escape for kayaking and fishing.

Golf and Leisure: Golfers have immediate access to the historic Fort Mill Golf Club, a local staple for nearly eight decades.

Community Spirit: Nothing says hospitality like a town festival. The annual South Carolina Strawberry Festival is a major draw, bringing the community together for live music, strawberry-themed eating contests, and a celebration of the local harvest.

Healthcare Access: Practicality is just as important as charm. Residents have close access to the new Piedmont Medical Center in town.

York County Library Board Approves New Book Collection Policy

Patrick Byrne, Editor

The York County Library Board officially approved a new Book Collection Policy today, establishing updated guidelines for selecting and organizing materials across the library system, with specific emphasis on age-appropriate content for juvenile and teen collections.

The new policy includes comprehensive criteria for selection, maintenance, and removal of materials, but key attention was paid to the sections governing books for younger patrons and the specific language addressing sexual and sexually explicit content.

Juvenile (Children) Collection (Ages up to 12)

The policy outlines specific criteria for materials in the Juvenile Collection, emphasizing the importance of format, quality, and age-appropriate content.

The selection criteria for this collection includes the General Selection Criteria with the added responsibility that the materials are age and developmentally appropriate.

In addition to general criteria, the policy states that the library will consider:

- The rulings of the South Carolina Department of Education.
- Guidance from the South Carolina State Library.
- Reviews by ratedbooks.org.
- Key Wording on Sexual Content:

The policy includes explicit language concerning sexual content for this collection:

The rulings of the South Carolina Department of Education, guidance from the South Carolina State Library, and reviews by ratedbooks.org will also be considered. In terms of sexual content, the library will additionally follow all applicable laws for minors and such State of South Carolina Provisos, as may be applicable.

The policy also introduces a provision for themes considered mature for the collection:

Books that contain or depict sexually explicit content are prohibited in the Juvenile-Collection and Juvenile

Sections of the Library's Branches. Books addressing topics on gender identity or other mature themes may be excluded from the Juvenile-Collection and placed in another collection

Teen Collection (Ages 13-17)
The Teen Collection section acknowledges the diverse interests, backgrounds, and development levels of this age group. Materials are selected to provide a balanced collection of popular and classic titles, with an awareness that paperbacks hold a special appeal.

Similar to the Juvenile Collection, the selection criteria for the Teen Collection includes the General Selection Criteria with the added responsibility that the materials are age and developmentally appropriate. The policy also requires consideration of rulings from the South Carolina Department of Education, guidance from the South Carolina State Library, and reviews by ratedbooks.org.

Key Wording on Sexual Content:
The language regarding sexual content in the Teen Collection also adheres to state guidelines:

The rulings of the South Carolina Department of Education, guidance from the South Carolina State Library, and reviews by ratedbooks.org will also be considered. In terms of sexual content, the library will additionally follow all applicable laws for minors and such State of South Carolina legislative Provisos, as may be applicable.

The policy also specifies that mature themes are acceptable for this collection, where appropriate:

Books addressing mature themes or topics on gender identity or other mature themes may be placed in the Teen-Collection and Teen Sections of the Library Branches, as may be designated.

The new policy takes effect immediately and will guide the York County Library staff in their selection and organization of materials going forward, ensuring a balanced collection while adhering to standards of age and developmental appropriateness.

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WEEKLY EVENTS

DR. TOM'S TRIVIA
TUESDAY, 6:30PM

BINGO WITH SHANE
THURSDAY, 6:30PM

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2025: A Year of Breaking Records, Breaking Ground, and Breaking News in Tega Cay

Thomas Hyslip, Editor

As 2025 comes to a close, Tega Cay and Fort Mill reflect on a year that was anything but ordinary. It was a twelve-month period defined by soaring highs—economic accolades, championship trophies, and a culinary explosion—and the grounding lows of crime and community tragedy. From the bright lights of Friday night football to the solemn quiet of memorials, here is the expanded look at the stories that defined our community in 2025.

The Gold Standard: Wealth and Livability

In October, the spotlight turned to local affluence as new data confirmed what many residents already suspected: Tega Cay was ranked as South Carolina's richest city. This top-tier designation solidified the city's status as an economic powerhouse in the region. Fort Mill also made the prestigious list, coming in strong at No. 7.

Earlier in the year, the secret was already out. In March, WorldAtlas released its highly anticipated list of the "Best Places to Live in South Carolina," with both Tega Cay and Fort Mill earning top billing for their safety, schools, and quality of life.

The community also proved its heart is as big as its wallet. In September, during Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, a local teen inspired the entire town of Fort Mill to "Turn Gold," raising awareness and funds in a display of unity that touched thousands.

A Dining Renaissance

2025 will be remembered as the year local dining options exploded. The region saw a wave of new openings that brought diverse flavors to our doorstep.

The year kicked off with Paco's Tacos & Tequila announcing an expansion to Fort Mill in January, setting the tone for a busy year in food news. By spring, the buzz was around Phat Burrito, which set its sights on a May opening, bringing its cult following to the area. In August, the fast-casual giant Cava confirmed a new location, adding a healthy Mediterranean option to the mix.

Established venues also saw major changes, setting the stage for an exciting 2026. After the City spent the spring fielding bids from 3 different contenders to revamp the clubhouse experience, a familiar name emerged victorious. The Garrison, having cemented itself as a local staple in Pineville, was awarded the contract to take over food and beverage operations at the golf club starting in 2026. Later in the year, Hoof & Barrel made headlines by taking over the former Famous Toastery site, promising a new chapter for the location.

A Toast to Excellence

Local craft beer aficionados had plenty to toast to in 2025, as Tega Cay's own Model A Brewing swept the competition on both a regional and state level. The brewery first turned heads in October, taking home Gold and Silver honors at the Charlotte Independent Brewers Alliance Awards. But the biggest accolade came in November, when Model A was crowned the "Best Overall Brewery" in the state, powering through the competition with an impressive six-medal haul that put Tega Cay firmly on the map for craft beer excellence.

Champions of the Field and Stage

Fort Mill High School's tradition of excellence was on full display in 2025, with students bringing home hardware in music and athletics.

The Fort Mill High School Marching Band enjoyed a spectacular season. In late September, they secured the Grand Championship at the Hickory Ridge Festival of Bands, only to follow it up days later by winning the Charger Cup Grand Champion title, proving they are one of the premier bands in the Carolinas.

On the field, the Girls Track team started the winning streak with a championship in May. In the fall, history was made when Fort Mill captured the inaugural York County Girls Flag Football Championship, marking a new era for women's sports in the district. The year ended with the Cross Country teams dominating the state meet in November.

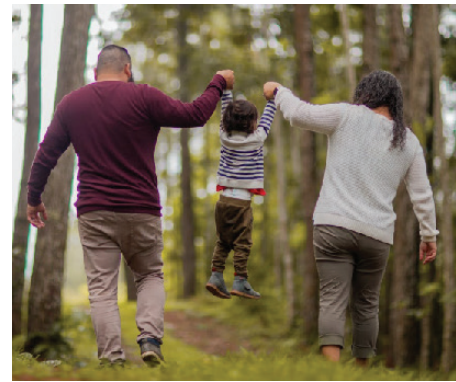
Crime and Public Safety

While the community flourished in many areas, 2025 also brought sobering headlines regarding public safety and youth violence.

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Healthy Living with Dr. Hall: How Nature Helps Your Brain Work Better

Dr. David Hall



Spending time outdoors doesn't just feel good — it actually helps your brain. Scientists say nature improves focus, memory, and creativity. When Hendrix Prather started school, he had a hard time sitting still and paying attention.

His mom decided to homeschool him for a while. Later, he joined Woodson Branch Nature School in North Carolina, where lessons happen both indoors and outside. Hendrix now studies reading and math in the morning, then spends time outdoors building with branches, painting, and gardening. He says exploring the forest helps him focus and release energy — and his mom says his learning has greatly improved.

Research strongly supports what Hendrix experiences. Studies show that being in green spaces helps both children and adults think more clearly. Even looking at pictures of nature can boost brain

activity. Kids who live near parks or trees tend to have better memory and attention. Brain scans reveal that people exposed to nature have more gray matter, which supports thinking and decision-making.

Experts like Dr. Marc Berman from the University of Chicago explain that time outside strengthens "executive function" — the brain's ability to plan, focus, and control emotions. Scientists believe nature helps because it gives the brain a chance to rest. The calm sights and sounds of the outdoors reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and let your mind recharge. Natural patterns, like tree branches or waves, are easy for the brain to process, making you feel more relaxed.

The takeaway: being in nature isn't just pleasant — it's vital for your mental health. A walk in the park, a bike ride, or even a few quiet minutes outdoors can help your brain work at its best.

Dr. David Hall is the owner of Hall Chiropractic Center. With over 40 years of experience, Dr. Hall is proud to serve the residents of Tega Cay and Fort Mill.

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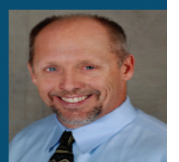
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Buzz around Town



Hoof & Barrel Officially Opens in Tega Cay

Thomas Hyslip, Editor



The wait is finally over for Tega Cay residents hungry for a new local dining option. Hoof & Barrel, the popular York-based restaurant known for its elevated comfort food, creates a new culinary chapter in the city as it officially opened its doors on Thursday, Dec. 11, 2025.

Located at 2429 Highway 160, the restaurant breathes new life into the retail space formerly occupied by The Famous Toastery. The opening marks a significant expansion for the locally loved eatery, bringing its scratch-made meals and Southern-inspired hospitality to the heart of Tega Cay.

First Impressions Ahead of the grand opening, the restaurant hosted a soft opening event to train staff and introduce the concept to the neighborhood. Early attendees were impressed by the transformation of the venue, noting that the renovated space looks fantastic. The food received high marks during the preview, with guests describing the dishes as amazing—a promising sign for the restaurant's debut.

The owners view this expansion as more than just a business expansion; they see it as an opportunity to weave themselves into the local fabric.

“We want to build lasting relationships, not just open our doors,” said co-owner Nicollette Booyesen. The team has already engaged with Tega Cay city officials to explore ways to

See Hoof & Barrel, Page 9

Washington hits 1,000-point milestone, leads Fort Mill past Gaffney



Chris Coffee, Sports Editor

On a night dedicated to recognizing individual history, A.J. Washington ensured the focus remained on the team's future.

Recognized before tipoff for reaching the 1,000-point career milestone, Washington helped power the Fort Mill Yellowjackets to a dominant 61-47 victory over the visiting Gaffney Indians on Friday.

The victory moves Fort Mill to 5-1 on the season, while Gaffney remains winless at 0-4.

“I feel blessed to achieve that goal,” Washington said. “A lot of people have helped me along the way — from Coach Lowery to my teammates.”

While the pregame festivities celebrated Washington's statistics, his performance on the court demonstrated why he has earned accolades ranging from All-Region to All-State. After a tight first quarter ended with Fort Mill leading 17-12, the Yellowjackets seized control in the second period.

Washington drained a 3-pointer late in the first half to push the lead to 31-18, part of a defensive clampdown that held the Indians to just six points in the second quarter. Fort Mill took a commanding 33-18 lead into halftime.

Fort Mill head coach Myron Lowery put the senior's achievement into historical perspective.

“It's a great accomplishment for A.J.,” Lowery said. “In my 36 years, I've had

less than 10 kids reach this milestone. It puts him in rarefied air.”

Lowery noted that Washington has been a varsity impact player since his freshman year, a rarity in high school basketball. “He's been a big guard with a knack for scoring,” Lowery said. “His basketball IQ is extraordinary.”

The Yellowjackets continued to surge in the second half. Aided by scoring from teammates Wallace Campbell and Jermier Nelson, Fort Mill extended its lead to as many as 27 points in the fourth quarter. Washington added to his career total with multiple drives and free throws in the second half to keep Gaffney at bay.

Despite the lopsided score, Washington's leadership stood out to the coaching staff.

“A.J. is a personable guy who can calm the team down when no one else can,” assistant coach Aaron Knight said.

For Washington and the Yellowjackets, the milestone is a stepping stone rather than the destination. After falling short in the state championship game last season, the team is motivated by “unfinished business.”

“Our ultimate goal is to win state,” Washington said.



Beyond the Scoreboard: FMHS Lacrosse Players Building Little Leaders



Kirsten Gordon

Once a week, long before the first bell rings at Fort Mill High School, a different kind of practice begins across town at Sugar Creek Elementary. For 1-2 hours each morning, players from the Fort Mill High School boys JV and Varsity lacrosse teams trade helmets and sticks for clipboards and picture books as they step into a new role: big brothers.

Instead of sleeping in or squeezing in extra study time, these student-athletes arrive at Sugar Creek Elementary just as the car line begins to form. They stand along the sidewalk, opening doors, greeting families by name, and offering high fives and smiles to students starting their day. The simple ritual turns a hectic drop-off into a welcoming, energetic moment that many younger children look forward to all week. Teachers and parents say this visible presence from older role models sets a positive tone that carries into the classroom.

Big brothers in the classroom

After the last car door closes, the lacrosse players head inside to work directly with students and teachers. In classrooms, they sit side by side with younger children, helping with reading, math worksheets, and hands-on projects. The players quietly redirect wandering attention, explain instructions in kid-friendly language, and celebrate small victories,

See Lacrosse, Page 9



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A Life in the Paint: Myron Lowery Reaches 400-Win Milestone



Chris Coffee, Sports Editor

Long before Myron Lowery was a fixture on the sidelines of the Carolinas' most competitive gyms, he was a five-year-old boy in Beckley, West Virginia, with a basketball practically glued to his hands. In his childhood home, the hardwood was only a few steps from his bedroom door.

Basketball is in Lowery's DNA. Reflecting on a life dedicated to basketball, Lowery said, "There was no Plan B. I always wanted to be a coach."

That singular focus reached a historic peak recently when Lowery, now the Head Coach at Fort Mill High School, recently secured his 400th career victory. The milestone came in dominant fashion during the Phenom 828 Showcase in Maiden, NC, where the Yellow Jackets soared to an 81-46 win. While he has since added more wins to that total, the number 400 serves as a towering testament to a career defined by consistency and evolution.

From Charlotte to Fort Mill

Lowery's journey to 400 began decades ago with a debut win

against Myers Park. Since then, he has become a staple of the region's basketball scene, spending 23 years as a head coach in the Charlotte area — leading programs at Harding, Providence, and Butler — before finding a home at Fort Mill.

"The great thing about 400 wins is that longevity is hard to achieve," Lowery said. "In that long period of time, there have been so many great wins. At Harding, we went back to my hometown and beat the number one team in West Virginia. That was early in my career and very significant. We were able to achieve a lot because of some great players."

His tenure at Butler High stands out as what he calls an "incredible run," but for Lowery, the true victory has been his ability to adapt. As the game changed, he changed with it, maintaining a bridge to every generation of athletes he mentored.

Built on Trust

While the history books record the wins, Lowery records the relationships. He credits his success to a simple philosophy: trust and passion.

"I think I've been able to communicate and relate with the kids," Lowery explained. "They see and know how hard I work, and they see the passion. They know I will do anything for them."

That sentiment is echoed by the Fort Mill administration. When Athletic Director Dwayne Hartsoe looked for a successor to lead the Yellow Jackets in 2023, he didn't have to look far. Lowery had served as Hartsoe's top assistant for three seasons, contributing to back-to-back Region titles.

"Fort Mill has been a phenomenal place," Lowery said. "Seeing my impact on these players as they've grown up ... that's been more valuable than the wins."

A Team Effort

True to his nature, Lowery is quick to deflect the spotlight. He notes that as a coach, he has "no points, rebounds, or assists" to his name — only the collective effort of the young men who played for him.

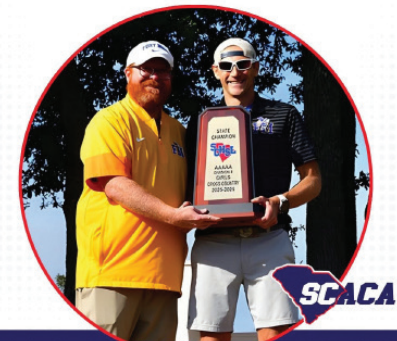
He also acknowledges the "starting lineup" at home that made the 400 wins possible. "I definitely want to thank my wife. Being a coach's wife is not easy. She knew what she signed up for and gets it. My two daughters have also always been extremely supportive."

With 400 wins in the rearview mirror, Lowery isn't slowing down. While the milestone is a moment to celebrate the past, his eyes are firmly fixed on the future. For the boy from Beckley who never had a Plan B, the next goal is clear: bringing a South Carolina state championship to Fort Mill.

Fort Mill's Lee Whitaker Named State Coach of the Year Following Historic Cross Country Season

Thomas Hyslip, Editor

GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY COACH OF THE YEAR



LEE WHITAKER

FORT MILL, SC—Fort Mill High School's distance running dynasty solidified its status at the top of South Carolina high school athletics as Head Cross Country Coach Lee Whitaker was named the South Carolina Track and Cross Country Coaches Association (SCTCCCA) 5A Division 2 Girls Cross Country Coach of the Year.

The prestigious honor follows a monumental season where Coach Whitaker guided the Fort Mill girls' team to their third consecutive state championship, capping a historic "three-peat" performance.

The Yellow Jackets dominated the SC High School 5A Division 2 State Championship, securing the team title with a commanding score of 38 points. The victory was a testament to the team's depth and strategic pack running, with Fort Mill's top five runners finishing within the top 16 overall.

Key to the team's success were top finishers like senior Marlee Cook, who led the charge with a 2nd place overall finish, freshman Lauren Allen in 4th place, and senior Alivia Cleveland, who rounded out the scoring in 6th place.

Coach Whitaker's accolades for the 2025 season were not limited to the girls' program, as he also led the Fort Mill Boys Cross Country Coach team to their second consecutive state title, completing a historic championship sweep for the program. His recognition by *See Whitaker, Page 9*

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Brooklyn Cheyenne Snider, 16, Tega Cay, SC



In Loving Memory of Brooklyn Cheyenne Snider

January 23, 2009 – December 16, 2025

Brooklyn Cheyenne Snider was an extraordinary young woman whose life, though far too short, was filled with kindness, humor, and love. Intelligent and mature beyond her years, she had a quiet wit that made people feel comfortable, seen, and valued.

She loved her friends, and cherished time with her family. She shared meaningful conversations and laughter with her mom Crystal, a special love of cars with her dad Daniel, and deep compassion for everyone around her. Brooklyn was a role model to her brother, Dane, and brought comfort and joy wherever she went.

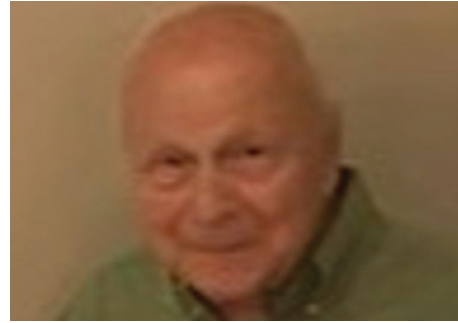
Brooklyn became ill in the fall of 2025 and bravely fought a complex medical battle during her hospitalization from October 30 to December 16, 2025. She passed away peacefully, surrounded by love.

Brooklyn's life will forever be remembered in sunsets by the lake, the sound of a manual transmission shifting gears, family gatherings, and the kindness she inspired in others. She will be deeply missed and forever loved.

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Joseph Louis Soprano, Sr., 88, Tega Cay, SC



Joseph Louis Soprano, Sr., "Joe", 88, of Tega Cay, SC and formerly of New Rochelle and Brewster, NY, passed away peacefully at home. Joe was born July 7, 1937 in Yonkers, NY, son of the late Pasquale and Esther Soprano. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his sister, Lois.

Extremely outgoing, Joe enjoyed life. He enjoyed sailing his pontoon boat on Lake Wylie, playing golf, tennis and pickleball and socializing with neighbors and friends. Joe was a Physical Education Teacher and Track and Field Coach at New Rochelle High School, New Rochelle, NY. As a parishioner at St. Philip Neri, he contributed his time as an usher, greeter and making pasta sauce in the kitchen for the Italian Festival.

A graduate of Manhattan College, Joe's achievements have been many. However, to name a few, he was inducted into the New Rochelle Sports Hall of Fame, the National Athlete and Coaches Hall of Fame, NY Section 1 Coaches Association Lacey Award, NY State Assembly Accomplished Sportsman Citation, Meritorious Service Award from Westchester County, NY Soccer Officials Association for officiating, former Little League and Babe Ruth Baseball Coach. Joe also previously served on the Tega Cay Golf Advisory Committee.

Most important to him was his family and he will forever be remembered as a loving and devoted husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather, brother, uncle and friend. Joe leaves a lasting legacy to be cherished by his survivors, his wife of 38 years, Valerie LoRe Soprano, brother Pat of Fort Mill, SC, mother-in-law Camille LoRe of Daytona Beach Shores, FL, son Joseph Jr., (Tina) of Queensbury, NY.

Valerie would like to extend her sincere appreciation to the Tega Cay Police Dept., Rescue Squad, Joe's physicians and their staff, her supportive family and friends for their compassion and care. Your kindness will never be forgotten.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to The Gary Sinise Foundation or the Tega Cay Police Department.

Peter Duane "Petey" Hatch, 11, Tega Cay, SC



With love and gratitude in our hearts for the memories we have gained, we celebrate the life of our son and brother Peter Duane Hatch.

Peter (or "Petey" as he preferred to be called), was born at the Seminary Road Inova Hospital in Alexandria, VA on February 20, 2014. Petey was a beautiful baby. He was large, cuddly boy weighing 9 lbs 11 ounces and soon became renowned for his napping ability. He almost never cried during the night.

Petey soon proved to be an eager playmate to his older sister, Cordelia. He loved to be outside and play in the dirt, including finding new rocks, insects, and worms and was always eager to throw a ball with his Daddy or to read a book with Mommy. He was a lover of vegetables and stuffed animals (especially squishmallows).

After moving to the Charlotte area, Petey began school at Dilworth Elementary School. He was social and was always eager to start a game of tag. Petey attended first grade, and despite the ongoing Covid-19 lockdown, became extremely proficient at both reading and math.

Petey attended Kings Town Elementary for grades 2-5. He loved interacting with both his teachers and his classmates. He was a regular presence in the school's gaga ball pit and loved riding the bus to school with his friends, despite an early pick-up time of 6:45.

Petey studied Tae Kwon Do at the Tiger Kim School in Tega Cay and earned his Black Belt in August of 2024. He loved participating in the Battle of Books competition at Kings Town where he was able to make special friendships and pursue his interest in reading. Petey especially enjoyed stories by Rick Riordan and the Alex Rider series by Anthony Horowitz.

He also enjoyed historical fiction, reading Tolkien fantasy with his Uncle Jonny, and learning about his namesake, Peter the Great of Russia.

Peter studied piano for four years with Ms. Mollie Smith. He loved classical music, especially Beethoven, and played versions of "Flight of the Bumblebee" and "Sonata Pathetique" at a yearly recital held in December

of 2025. Petey also played tuba as part of Gold Hill Middle School 6th grade band. He loved the opportunity to play music as part of a group. He worked extra hard to learn his rhythms and note names.

Petey and his family were members of the Tega Cay Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Peter loved learning songs about the Gospel and participating in activities with the rest of his youth group.

Petey also played for two years as an offensive lineman for the Fort Mill Reapers Pop Warner football team. He loved watching college football with his Dad. He always savored cheering for the Tennessee Volunteers (orange was his favorite color) and studying the most recent rankings, standings, and statistics.

Petey loved math and dreamed of becoming a math professor. He was a member of the Gold Hill Middle School Math Club and always impressed his parents with his ability to do quick and accurate calculations.

Petey also loved travel and the outdoors. As a four-year old he participated in a winter trip to Iceland and would later cross the country several times on road trips to meet his cousins living in Utah, Montana, and Nebraska. He was proud of the fact he had visited 44 states and loved to compare the places he had visited with his friends and acquaintances. His longest trip was to visit the family of his Nana Haimann in Newcastle, England, which he completed in April of 2024.

Petey and his sister also loved attending annual outdoor summer camps offered at the Alta Mons retreat in Shawsville, Virginia and where he spent the weekend before.

Petey, 11, passed quietly and unexpectedly in his sleep the morning of December 22, 2025. He is survived by his parents Robert and Julie Hatch, his three siblings: Cordelia (13), Thomas (8), and Walter (5), his grandparents Steven and Christine Haimann of Tega Cay, SC and Joel and Christine Hatch of Roy, UT as well as a loving extended family of aunts uncles and cousins.

Petey's family expresses their gratitude for the many emergency responders, neighbors, school workers, friends, teammates, and church members that have provided service and sent condolences during this tender time. Although our hearts are broken, we find comfort in the words of scripture when the Savior said, "I am the resurrection and the life...whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." (John 11:25-26). At this time we are thankful for Petey's kind and loving spirit, his willingness to serve and share, including his preparation to serve as a Deacon in the Church.

Lacrosse, From Page 6

whether it is mastering a tough word or finishing a science activity. For many elementary students, having a “big brother” in a high school jersey leaning over their desk is both motivating and reassuring. Says senior varsity leader, Chase Barrington-Hughes, “I really look forward to these mornings where I can greet the kids by name, high five them, and hype them up for a great day ahead. Seeing them so excited by us being there, makes me excited to show up each time”.

Defenseman Van Jantzen and attackman Jon Hall help kids with games to celebrate the 67th Day of school.

Support for teachers

The impact is felt just as strongly by the teachers. While students work, the lacrosse players also jump in behind the scenes: grading simple assignments, organizing papers, straightening supplies, and helping reset the room between activities. Those extra sets of hands-free teachers to focus on small-group instruction and individual support that might otherwise be hard to provide in a busy classroom. Fourth grade teacher Melissa Blair shares, “My kids look forward to the lacrosse boys coming each time. They often request the players by name in the classroom. It really inspires them to become leaders when they are that age.” The partnership turns what could be routine tasks into a shared effort between educators and student-athletes.

Building character and connection

For the Fort Mill players, the experience is as formative as any practice or game. Showing up every week before their own school day demands discipline, reliability, and a sense of responsibility to others. They learn how to communicate with younger children, how to model patience, and how to carry themselves as leaders in a setting where the scoreboard does not matter. Many describe it as a reminder that their influence in the community goes far beyond the lacrosse field. This is a character mantra that their Coach Alex Tindall teaches alongside the game IQ on the field. His motto “E.A.T.”, which stands for excellence,

attitude, and toughness reinforces leadership, positivity, and grit - all traits which translate from the home to the classroom, field, community, and beyond.

Defenseman Chase Barrington-Hughes greets a young student by name while teammates, from left, goalie Ben Blair, midfielder Charlie McGuire, and defender Van Jantzen help students with their classwork.

A community tradition in the making

What began as a service opportunity is quickly becoming a meaningful tradition that links two campuses and generations of students. Sugar Creek Elementary gains energetic mentors and extra classroom support, while Fort Mill High School sends out young men who understand that leadership is measured not only in goals and ground balls, but in the quiet moments of showing up early and consistently, listening, and helping younger kids feel seen. One morning a week, a car line and a few classrooms become the place where that lesson comes to life. Sugar Creek Elementary Principal Jenn Hendershot says, “Although our Sugar Creek students are not zoned to attend Fort Mill High School, the Fort Mill High School lacrosse team has shown us what it truly means to be part of a community. This fall, they consistently showed up to support our school. Whether it was volunteering their time or standing in the car line on the coldest mornings to open doors and welcome our Sharks with smiles. Their dedication has been incredibly heartwarming, and we are so very grateful for the leadership, kindness, and character these young men model every day. They have made such a lasting impact on our students!”

Follow the FMHS lacrosse team on Instagram @fortmillboyslaxrosse



2025 Review, From Page 5

The summer and fall were particularly difficult. In July, eight individuals were charged following a shocking teen mob attack at a Fort Mill 7-Eleven. Tensions remained high in August with the arrest of four people involved in fentanyl distribution in Tega Cay, highlighting the ongoing battle against opioids.

September saw one of the year's darkest moments with a fatal shooting at a Fort Mill park, which resulted in charges against two teenagers. Other incidents included an armed individual arrested at a Publix in April, and the tragic death of an off-duty Mecklenburg detention officer in an August crash.

The year closed with a disturbing report in December, as a Fort Mill teen was held without bond in Charlotte, accused of statutory sex offenses and the exploitation of a 13-year-old.

Remembrance and The Unexplained

We end our review with the stories that touched our hearts and sparked our imaginations.

In late December, the community mourned the loss of 16-year-old Brooklyn Cheyenne Snider. Her passing was felt deeply across Tega Cay, reminding us of the fragility of life.

Finally, in a story that left many scratching their heads, 2025 concluded with a mystery. On December 18, local youth reported a cryptid sighting in the woods of Tega Cay, describing an encounter that “chilled them to the bone.” Whether fact or folklore, it was a strange end to a memorable year.

Hoof & Barrel, From Page 6

support community initiatives, local events, and charitable programs.

On the Menu Hoof & Barrel is bringing its “greatest hits” from the York location to Tega Cay, offering a menu designed to satisfy nearly every palate. The focus remains on hearty, approachable dishes served with creative flair.

Diners can expect unique starters like “Constrictors” (bacon-wrapped jumbo shrimp with spicy ranch), “Toadstools” (deep-fried beer-battered mushrooms), and “Chili Cheese Fries” loaded with house-made chili.

The entree list features a mix of high-quality steaks, seafood, and comfort classics, including:

Shrimp Happens: Jumbo shrimp served over creamy, cheesy grits.

The Baseball Sirloin: An 8 oz. chargrilled Angus steak.

Chops O Pork: An 11 oz. bone-in, marinated pork chop.

Burgers: Creative stacks like “Da Phat Patty” (double meat with bacon) and the “Makin’ Bacon” (topped with pimento cheese and bacon jam).


Whitaker, From Page 8

the SCACA (South Carolina Athletic Coaches Association) and the state's cross country coaches association underscores the exceptional level of excellence and consistency he has built at Fort Mill High School.

The dual state championships and subsequent coaching honors firmly establish Coach Whitaker as one of the state's elite leaders, fostering a program that continually produces championship-caliber performances.

Lighter fare includes the “Hoof Cobbler Salad” and the “Philly Goat Salad,” alongside a dedicated kids menu and desserts like “Steve’s Fritter à la Mode.” The location also features a full bar serving cocktails, wine, and draft beer.

A Welcome Addition The arrival of Hoof & Barrel fills a void left since the closure of The Famous Toastery, providing a locally owned alternative in a landscape often dominated by chains. With its scenic location near the lake and a commitment to community involvement, the restaurant is poised to become a new gathering spot for Tega Cay residents.



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Charlie's Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

- 1) Waste of a vote?
- 5) Assemble
- 10) Striker's Benedict Arnold
- 14) Word before "sapiens"
- 15) Draw ___ in the sand
- 16) They run up in bars
- 17) What life is, in a tune
- 20) Rustlers' chasers
- 21) Standing out prominently
- 22) Penultimate word in fairy tales
- 25) "Guarding ___" (MacLaine movie)
- 26) It may be iced when it's warm outside
- 29) Middle of the month
- 31) Catch sight of from a distance
- 35) Cousin on "The Addams Family"
- 36) Goosebump-inducing
- 38) Miscellaneous collection
- 39) Difficult puzzle, e.g.
- 43) Cattle call handout
- 44) 1960s jacket eponym
- 45) Become aware of
- 46) Not on the level?
- 49) Easter egg decorator
- 50) Mins. x 60
- 51) Bread unit
- 53) One place for hay
- 55) Easy to get along with
- 58) Wear in bad weather?
- 62) Premise of many sitcoms
- 65) LeBlanc of "Friends"
- 66) City on the Missouri
- 67) Movies, slangily
- 68) Greek counterpart of Mars
- 69) Historic Alabama city
- 70) J.K. Rowling is one

DOWN

- 1) English bloke
- 2) Stereotypical freight hopper
- 3) Surname among the "Good Times" cast
- 4) Use a divining rod
- 5) ___ Luis, Brazil
- 6) Polar wee one
- 7) Small spasms
- 8) Lose the derby?
- 9) Prepared potatoes
- 10) Anxiety stimulus
- 11) "Am I my brother's keeper?" speaker
- 12) Assist an arsonist, e.g.
- 13) Some four-year dogs.
- 18) Assessed
- 19) Get to one's feet
- 23) Home to 11-Down's parents
- 24) Second or third TV showing
- 26) Pageant winner's headgear
- 27) Cultural value system
- 28) ___ costs (by any means)
- 30) Put on the spot?
- 32) Fail to match, as colors
- 33) Kitchen gizmo
- 34) Coupling devices for farm animals
- 37) Kind of alcohol
- 40) They're certainly not dreamers
- 41) Cookie that can be disassembled
- 42) Teenager's time limit
- 47) He worked with couples
- 48) Forbidden things
- 52) Log-transport channel
- 54) Devices to catch the unsuspecting
- 55) At quite a distance
- 56) Small parasite
- 57) Catalog card abbr.
- 59) Narc follower?
- 60) '30s art type
- 61) "While" leader of old
- 62) Org. for MDs
- 63) Measure of resistance
- 64) Org. governing air traffic

MEALY-MOUTHED

By Timothy E. Parker

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Tega Cay, SC Real Estate Market Report: November 2025

Based on data from Sally Awad Premier Sotheby's International Realty and local market activity

The real estate landscape in Tega Cay, South Carolina, continues to demonstrate resilience and desirability as we move through November 2025. This month's market report, reflecting data available through Premier Sotheby's International Realty, highlights a market that is evolving into a more balanced yet competitive environment. With distinct shifts in pricing, inventory, and days on the market, both buyers and sellers have new strategic factors to consider.

Market Overview: Price Growth and Stability

November 2025 data points to

continued value appreciation in Tega Cay. The median sale price for homes in the area has shown robust growth year-over-year.

Median Sale Price: Recent statistics indicate the median sale price is hovering around \$566,000, representing a significant increase (approximately 14%) compared to the same time last year.

Price Per Square Foot: Values have seen a steady climb, with the median price per square foot reaching roughly \$238, up over 8% annually.

This appreciation underscores Tega Cay's persistent appeal as a lakeside community with top-rated schools and recreational amenities. High-end

properties, particularly those with waterfront views or in established neighborhoods like River Hills and Lake Shore, continue to command premium prices, pushing the upper tier of the market well over the \$1 million mark.

Inventory and Days on Market

One of the most notable shifts in the November 2025 report is the change in the pace of sales.

Days on Market: Homes are spending longer on the market compared to the rapid-fire pace of previous years. The average time to sell has increased to approximately 88 days. This deceleration suggests that buyers are becoming more selective, taking the time to conduct due diligence rather

than engaging in immediate bidding wars.

Inventory Levels: Inventory remains tight but is slowly expanding. This "somewhat competitive" environment means that while sellers are still receiving strong offers, the frenzy has cooled slightly, allowing for more normalized negotiation periods.

Recent Market Activity

Single-Family Homes: Standard family homes have seen activity in the \$420,000 to \$650,000 range, catering to the core residential demand.

Luxury Segment: The luxury market remains active, with properties in the \$700,000+ range continuing to close.

YoCo News

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Shining a Light on York and Lancaster Counties

January 2026

World Atlas Names York, SC One of the Best Small Towns to “Chill Out”

Thomas Hyslip, Editor



YORK, SC – A major travel publication has turned its spotlight on York County, naming the city of York as one of the best small towns in South Carolina to relax and unwind.

In a recent article titled "The Best Small Towns in South Carolina to Chill Out," World Atlas selected York as a top destination, praising it as a "traditional Southern town" that offers a perfect mix of history and leisure.

The publication highlighted the city's historic commercial district, specifically noting the prominent architecture and the iconic York County Courthouse. For those looking to explore the area's rich past, the article pointed to the McCelvey Center, a historic site that houses the Southern Revolutionary War Institute and a 500-seat theater known for hosting the Southern Sound Series.

Beyond history, World Atlas emphasized the "relaxed way to experience the town," recommending a visit to Congress Street for dining. The Hoof and Barrel was singled out as a "comfortable setting" for a meal within the historic district.

The feature also noted York County's place within the Olde English District and its blend of historical sites and open spaces. It specifically mentioned the Anne Springs Close Greenway as a prime example of the region's outdoor appeal, offering visitors a quiet place to spend an afternoon.

York joined other South Carolina destinations on the list, including Beaufort, Spartanburg, Aiken, Georgetown, North Myrtle Beach, Hilton Head Island, and Clemson.

York County Council Sets Clover School District Impact Fee at \$8,000, Halving District's Request



Thomas Hyslip, Editor

The York County Council voted Monday to set the impact fee for the Clover School District at \$8,000 per new single-family home. The decision, effective immediately, doubles the current fee but provides only half of the funding requested by the school district.

The Clover School District requested a fee increase to \$15,035 to support the construction of three new schools needed to accommodate rapid population growth. Supporters urged the Council to ensure that new development funds the necessary infrastructure, arguing the cost should not fall on existing taxpayers.

However, the proposal met resistance from the Home Builders Association and some council members who voiced concerns over housing affordability. Opponents also noted the fee could unfairly impact rural residents not served by the new facilities.

Following a failed motion to defer the decision, the Council approved the compromised \$8,000 rate. Fees for multi-family units and other housing types will be pro-rated based on this new standard.



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YoCoNews.com

Lake Wylie High School Hires Nicholas Pelham as Inaugural Head Coach

Thomas Hyslip, Editor



The Clover School District Board officially approved Nicholas Pelham on Wednesday as the first-ever head football coach for Lake Wylie High School (LWHS). Pelham joins the Chargers from White Knoll High School, where he served as both head coach and athletic director.

Pelham brings a championship pedigree to the new program. His tenure at White Knoll included a historic 2023 season marked by an undefeated regular season and a finish as the State 5A Runner-Up. These achievements earned him the 2023 SCACA Football Coach of the Year award and a nomination for the 2024 NHSASA National Football Coach of the Year. Previously, he served as Defensive Coordinator for powerhouse Dutch Fork High School.

LWHS Athletic Director Steven Peeler emphasized Pelham's ability to instill a "physical brand" of football and accountability. "Coach Pelham knows how to build a program the right way," Peeler stated.

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25	44	40	18	63	53	18	63
37	60	★	13	30	0	13	30
33	5	27	48	53	3	48	53
21	70	57	68	56	8	56	8

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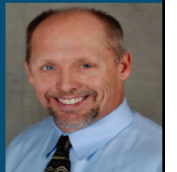
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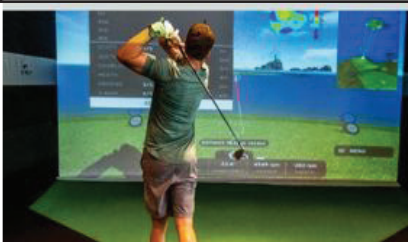
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