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JOURNAL SCENE

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Gingrich reacts Saturday night as he and his wife Callista arrive at a primary victory rally. To Gingrich's back right is S.C. Speaker of the House Bobby Harrell.

Gingrich sweeps county, state

BY **LESLIE CANTU**
The Journal Scene

The airwaves are mercifully free of political ads this week, but South Carolina voters could well

have changed the game for the upcoming primary in Florida.

Dorchester County, along with most other counties, went for former House Speaker Newt Gingrich as the choice for

Republican presidential nominee.

Monday, news outlets were reporting that polls showed Gingrich leading in polls in Florida, which holds its primary

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Candidate makes stop in S'ville

BY **LESLIE CANTU**
The Journal Scene

One day before his victory in the South Carolina Republican Presidential Primary, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich was in Summerville to meet with area pastors and others at a private luncheon at Summer House in Historic Downtown Summerville.

On the heels of the controversy over Gingrich's comments about a "food stamp president" and needing to tell the black community why they should demand paychecks and not food stamps, The Journal Scene



The Gingrichs are greeted on their arrival as supporter Chris Horne looks on.

asked how Gingrich would help ensure well-paying jobs were avail-

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Republican Presidential candidate Newt Gingrich arrives at Summer House on West Luke Street in Historic Downtown Summerville with his wife Callista.

Controversial tree to come down

BY **JIM TATUM**
The Journal Scene

A tree many have complained about for some time near the intersection of West Richardson Avenue and Old Postern Road is coming down.

The tree, which is growing at the rear of a ditch just west of Old Postern Road, has been a source of complaints for many drivers, especially residents of the Gadsden neighborhood, for which Old Postern Road serves as an access.

Recently, SCDOT officials performed a line of sight inspection at the intersection and determined the tree to be a safety hazard.

"The tree is growing in the state right of way," Assistant District Maintenance Engineer Kirk Richards said Thursday. "The next step is to act on a request from the town to remove the tree."

The tree is protected by a town tree ordinance, which requires certain criteria to be met before a tree can be cut down in the town limits. Town Engineer Russ Cornette said

the town tree committee has inspected the site and determined that the tree should come down.

Richards said he has been in contact with city officials, who are in the process of forwarding a formal request for SCDOT to go ahead and remove the tree.

The action comes in the wake of a serious traffic accident that occurred at that intersection Jan. 2 when an 80-year-old man attempting to turn onto West Richardson from Old Postern Road pulled in front of a dump truck loaded with

sand. The truck struck the car before going off the roadway, flipping, and crashing through a residential fence where it came to rest less than ten feet away from a family swing set.

The driver of the truck was unhurt but the driver of the car died from his injuries the following evening.

While that accident was the only one to occur at that intersection since 2005, residents of the neighborhood say they have complained for some time that the intersection has a number of safety issues. First, it is on a curve on a busy section of West

Richardson, which is an artery for traffic headed into and out of downtown Summerville. Because there are no traffic lights between Highway 78 and Central Avenue/Cedar Street, cars and commercial trucks can and do merge onto Richardson from 78 without having to significantly slow down.

Then there are concerns with two trees on either side of the intersection, especially the oak tree now slated to come down.

"What happens is that when you

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Economic forecast hopeful

BY **LESLIE CANTU**
The Journal Scene

The economy is poised to improve in 2012, though probably not as quickly as most would like, an economist told the Greater Summerville Dorchester Chamber Thursday.

Stephen Slifer, owner of NumberNomics, was the keynote speaker at the Chamber's annual awards luncheon and economic forecast.

He sees hopeful signs, but conceded that he's more optimistic than most economists.

Slifer said he anticipates learning that the fourth quarter of 2011 saw GDP growth of 3.8 percent and that 2012 will see GDP growth of 3 percent.

Other economists are predicting 2.2 percent growth this year, he said.

He also believes that unemployment will drop to 7.6 percent - better than the cur-

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Economist Stephen Slifer tells Chamber members why he believes the economy will improve this year.

Redistricting plan approved

The U.S. Department of Justice has approved the redistricting plan submitted by Dorchester County.

After the decennial Census, the County district lines are redrawn to allow for the change of population throughout the county. Each district is drawn in a way that allows for them to balance population wise.

The purpose is to bring balance to the representation of citizens to Council members and to come in to compliance of the 1965 Voting Rights Act

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