

The State

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2010

GAMECOCKS ROCK

USC crushes Southern Mississippi 41-13 as Garcia, Lattimore and a smothering defense shine, **D1**



USC's Stephen Garcia and Marcus Lattimore celebrate a second-quarter touchdown by Lattimore.

GERRY MELENDEZ/
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IN-DEPTH GAME COVERAGE: Garcia, offense off to impressive start, **D1**

SUSPENSIONS: King, Culliver, Saunders sit out game, **D4**

GOGAMECOCKS.COM: Fan galleries, post-game interviews and more

S.C. TAX OVERHAUL

Panel recommends gas tax boost for roads

By GINA SMITH
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Tax experts recommend South Carolina drivers pay 5 cents a gallon more for unleaded gas to generate \$150 million more each year for road repair.

"I don't think anyone

would disagree the roads are in pretty bad shape," said Kenneth Cosgrove, one of 10 Tax Realignment Commission members who voted unanimously Thursday to raise the gas tax.

Currently 16 cents a gal-

SEE **GAS TAX PAGE A8**

COLUMBIA MAYOR'S OFFICE

City hires two ex-Benjamin staffers



Benjamin

By ADAM BEAM
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Mayor Steve Benjamin is setting up his office to be CEO of the city.

City manager Steve Gantt has hired two of Benjamin's former campaign staffers - Michael Wukela and Sam Johnson - and assigned them to the mayor's office. Wukela and Johnson are tempo-

rary employees with no benefits and will be paid an hourly rate until December, when, Gantt said, he will re-evaluate their positions. They make less than \$50,000 a year each, which means their salaries are not public information under state law.

Even though City Council doesn't have to vote on the hirings, Benjamin received council's blessing two weeks ago during a

closed meeting - closed, Benjamin said, because council was discussing a "personnel issue," which is exempt under the state's open meetings law.

Benjamin's office now has four paid people: the mayor, Wukela, Johnson and secretary Connie Lucius. Benjamin also has four unpaid interns, part of his City

SEE **BENJAMIN PAGE A8**



Index: Abby, **E4** | Business, **B6** | Classified, **F2** | Comics, **E4** | Movies, **E6** | Opinion, **A6**

Weather: 8 a.m. Sunny, 63 | 1 p.m. Sunny, 93 | 7 p.m. Sunny, 89 **B8**

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