



**HIGH: 83**  
**LOW: 60**  
Weather, 8B

**MORMON IN HARLEM**

Commitment to diversity is drawing blacks to Mormonism. **1C**

**Beaufort Ospreys Alumni game ends in a tie 1B**



# The Beaufort Gazette

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## Marines make preparations for the 2008 hurricane season

By **PATRICK DONOHUE**  
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The protection of thousands of Marines and billions of dollars in airplanes and equipment are a top priority for Beaufort's military installations as they prepare for the start of hurricane season next week.

Mark Hamilton, deputy director of operations for Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, said the base works

**"It's only through that coordinated effort that we're going to save lives and minimize potential injury and property damage."**

Mark Hamilton, deputy director of operations for Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort

with state and county emergency management year-round to ensure the equipment and those stationed there are safe in the event of a destructive storm. "It is very important that our efforts are coordinated so that the information which is provided to our Marines,

sailors and civilian staff is consistent with that from the state and the county during the critical days and hours prior to a significant event," he said.

In addition to the air station's overall hurricane readiness and evacuation plans, each squadron and unit has additional procedures specific to their unit.

If a storm capable of producing damaging winds appears to be headed toward Beaufort, Hamilton said there is a plan to get the estimated \$1.75 billion

in planes at the air station out of harm's way.

"If necessary, MCAS pilots will fly aircraft from Marine Aircraft Group 31 and VFA-86 to various military air bases throughout the Southeast, outside the path of the approaching storm," Hamilton said. "Non-flying aircraft will be stored in the hangars aboard the air station. The hangars provide

Please see **MARINES** on 7A

## Road trip on a budget

**SAVE GAS WITH THESE TIPS:**

- Fuel economy efficiency decreases by 10 percent for every 5 miles per hour you drive over 60 mph.
- Clean your air filter. A clogged filter can decrease fuel economy by 10 percent.
- Check tire pressure. Every 3 pounds below your tires' recommended pressure drops fuel economy by 1 percent.
- Use cruise control to maintain a steady speed.
- A warm engine gets better mileage than a cold one.
- Avoid idling, you get 0 miles per gallon!
- Using air conditioning reduces fuel economy, use it only when needed.
- Aggressive driving, speeding or rapid acceleration and braking, can lower fuel economy as much 33 percent at highway speeds and 5 percent in the city.

**Travel tips to save gas!!**

Source: EPA and AAA Carolinas

**GASOLINE PRICES IN THE CAROLINAS**

	Memorial Day Weekend 2007	Easter Weekend 2008	Memorial Day Weekend 2008	Price Difference 2007-2008
Charleston	\$ 2.963	\$ 3.142	\$ 3.729	up 77 cents
Columbia	\$ 3.007	\$ 3.156	\$ 3.732	up 73 cents
SC Average	\$ 3.007	\$ 3.159	\$ 3.726	up 72 cents
NC Average	\$ 3.143	\$ 3.260	\$ 3.856	up 71 cents
National Average	\$ 3.209	\$ 3.280	\$ 3.880	up 67 cents

**Price difference**

**MONEY IN THE TANK**

Want to know why gas prices are so high? We've got the answers. **5B**

**Based on a \$3.88 gallon of gas, which is the national average... HOW MUCH WILL IT COST TO GET FROM HERE TO THERE AND BACK AGAIN?**

Beaufort to:	Distance to:	4-door car (30 mpg)	4-door hybrid (42 mpg)	SUV (21mpg)	Minivan (20 mpg)	Full-size truck (17 mpg)
Hunting Island	18 miles	\$ 4.65	\$ 3.33	\$ 6.65	\$ 6.98	\$ 8.22
Hilton Head Island	41 miles	10.61	7.58	15.15	15.91	18.72
Savannah	47 miles	12.16	8.68	17.37	18.24	21.45
Charleston	70 miles	18.11	12.93	25.87	27.16	31.95
Columbia	142 miles	23.80	17.00	34.00	35.70	42.00
Myrtle Beach	172 miles	44.49	31.78	63.56	66.74	78.51
Charlotte	232 miles	60.01	42.86	85.73	90.02	105.90
Greenville	237 miles	61.30	43.79	87.58	91.96	108.18
Atlanta	287 miles	74.24	53.03	106.05	111.36	131.01

Source: EPA and AAA. MPG based on combined average of city/highway estimates. Calculations based on national gas price average of \$3.88/gallon as of May 23, 2008.

**How much will it cost?**

## Nuclear plant to be built in Aiken

**A \$2.7 billion contract with a French company would convert weapons-grade plutonium into fuel for commercial reactors.**

The Associated Press

AIKEN — The U.S. Energy Department has finalized a \$2.7 billion contract with a French company to build a South Carolina plant where weapons-grade plutonium will be converted into commercial reactor fuel, the company announced Friday.

The modified contract allows Shaw Areva MOX Services to complete construction of the facility at the Savannah River nuclear complex near Aiken, said Shaw spokesman Sean Clancy.

The facility for converting weapons-grade plutonium into a mixed-oxide fuel to be burned in commercial nuclear power reactors would be the first of its kind in the U.S.

The process has been used for decades in Europe, and France has been a pioneer of the technology.

Construction began in August on the 600,000-square-foot facility, which is expected to open in 2016. It had been delayed because of complications with a corresponding Russian facility.

The Bush administration for years has had plans to convert 34 tons of weapons-grade plutonium into a mixed oxide fuel, or MOX, as part of a program with Russia in which both countries agree to dispose of an equal amount of the material from their weapons stockpiles.

A year ago, the Bush administration announced plans to convert more weapons-grade plutonium than previously planned. A senior Energy Department official said additional tons of plutonium can be taken from dismantled warheads and disposed of, beyond the 34 tons already planned to be converted to commercial fuel.

The plant, which is expected eventually to employ hundreds of workers, will be owned by the U.S. Energy Department but operated by Shaw Areva.

## Churches may leave airwaves in wake of broadcasting fees

By **BRANDON HONIG**  
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Six Beaufort area churches that have broadcast their sermons on the local Sea Islands' Channel 7 for years might stop the service because Comcast now is charging the churches for broadcasting.

Instead of offering free broadcasts, Comcast is asking churches and other nonprofits to pay about 70 percent of the rate charged to regular customers, Comcast regional general manager Bill Watson said.

The Baptist Church of Beaufort, whose 65-minute program airs twice a week on Channel 7, will be charged \$2,352 annually if it decides to continue the broadcasts, which can be seen

**AFFECTED CHURCHES**

- Baptist Church of Beaufort
- Community Bible Church
- Beaufort Church of God
- Spoken Word Outreach Ministries
- Life House Church
- The Way of God Church of the Lord Jesus

from Lady's Island to Fripp Island. The church, which pays \$4,924 a year to broadcast on Charter Cable in the city of Beaufort, has not decided if it will continue broadcasting on Comcast.

"We're in a holding pattern right now, trying to figure out what to do because

it wasn't budgeted," ministry assistant Paul Capps said Friday.

Friedhelm Dohmann, founder of outreach group AllChurch, said he was granted free airtime for churches on Channel 7 through a verbal agreement with U.S. Cable in 1994, about 10 years before Comcast bought it. That arrangement remained intact until a few months ago, when churches began receiving letters that said the cable provider would seek payment if the churches wished to continue broadcasts after May 1.

"I think it's very important to be consistent," Watson said Tuesday. "We do charge nonprofits — it's not directed (solely) at churches — and we found we were not being consistent. We can't give free (access) to one nonprofit and

not do it for all nonprofits."

Watson said the free airtime given to churches in the Beaufort area was an isolated case; in other parts of Comcast's network, churches and nonprofits are charged discounted rates.

"Some elderly especially enjoyed having (church broadcasts) when they didn't have a way (to get to church)," Dohmann said. "It's also nice to have a variety of different churches... show something in common that all the churches have."

Instead of sticking with cable, AllChurch might purchase \$6,000 to \$7,000 worth of equipment to enable local sermons to be shown via streaming media on the Internet, Dohmann said.

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**COMING TOMORROW**

**Are you overfeeding your pet?** LIFE & TIMES

