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The Augusta Chronicle

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Across South Carolina

By From Wire Reports

Population growth alters rural areas

COLUMBIA - South Carolina's growth is changing the state's rural landscape.

The state's population grew 1.4 percent last year, the 12th-fastest growth rate nationwide, up from 18th-fastest in 2001, according to a recent U.S. Census Bureau report.

Most of the growth occurred along the coast and in the suburbs around Columbia, Greenville and Charlotte, N.C., as once-rural areas became bedroom communities for expanding cities. The five fastest-growing towns, in order, were Blythewood, Bluffton, Lexington, Summerville and Mauldin.

The state's three fastest-growing counties between 2000 and 2005 were Dorchester, York and Horry. Newcomers accounted for more than 10 percent of the population gains.

Woman wanted over amputation arrested

COLUMBIA - A woman accused of cutting off a woman's hand during a fight has surrendered to authorities.

Adrienne Moultrie, 20, of Columbia, turned herself in Saturday afternoon at the Allendale Police Department, said Chris Cowan, a Richland County sheriff's spokesman. County deputies talked to her family and persuaded her to surrender, Mr. Cowan said.

Ms. Moultrie is charged with assault and battery with intent to kill. She was at the Richland County jail Saturday night.

Deputies say Ms. Moultrie and the victim were fighting over a man Thursday when Ms. Moultrie got a large knife and cut the other woman's hand off.

Doctors at Duke University Medical Center in Durham, N.C., were able to reattach the left hand of 22-year-old Marquisha Jackson of Columbia, officials said.

Water warning ends around Charleston

CHARLESTON - A boil-water advisory was lifted Sunday morning for all homes and business in the Charleston area, after another round of lab tests found the water safe to drink.

The advisory was lifted Saturday night for much of Charleston County. It was lifted Sunday morning for Sullivans Island, Folly Beach and customers of Dorchester and Dorchester County water authorities, said Thom Berry, a spokesman for the state Department of Health and Environmental Control, which conducted the tests.

About 200,000 homes and businesses had been asked to boil water after a main line broke Friday evening.

Ex-officer is accused of fondling three girls

COLUMBIA - A former Camden police officer has been charged with fondling three young girls.

Rhett Linley Kelly Jr., 32, of Columbia, was arrested Friday and charged with three counts of committing or attempting a lewd act on a child younger than 16, according to a release from the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division.

The victims are now 8, 10 and 14 years old, according to arrest warrants. The incidents occurred between May 2001 and March 2006, the warrants state. Mr. Kelly's arrest was the result of an investigation by the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division.

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