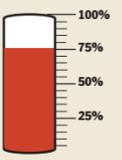


Half price on \$20 worth of food at Frosty Frog. Go to dealsaver.com/Beaufort

UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN
United Way of the Lowcountry reaches 76 percent of \$2.8 million fundraising goal **2A**



The Beaufort Gazette

FRIDAY, December 16, 2011

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WITHDRAWAL FROM IRAQ

OVER AND OUT

US military formally ends 9-year mission

DRAWING DOWN

As of Thursday, there were two U.S. bases and less than 4,000 U.S. troops in Iraq — a dramatic drop from the roughly 500 military installations and as many as 170,000 troops during the surge ordered by President George W. Bush in 2007, when violence and raging sectarianism gripped the country. More than 50,000 U.S. troops and their equipment has been moved out of Iraq over the past year.

All U.S. troops are slated to be out of the country by the end of the year, but officials are likely to meet that goal earlier.

By **LOLITA C. BALDOR** and **REBECCA SANTANA**
The Associated Press

Nearly nine years after American troops stormed across the Iraq border in a blaze of shock and awe, U.S. officials quietly ended the bloody and bitterly divisive conflict Thursday, but the debate over whether it was worth the cost in money and lives is yet unsettled.

While many of the speeches painted a picture of victory — for both the troops and the Iraqi people now set on a path for democracy — the questions remain: Will Iraqis be able to forge their new government amid the still-stubborn sectarian clashes? And will Iraq be able to defend itself and remain independent in a region fraught with turmoil and still steeped in insurgent threats?

BY THE NUMBERS

9
Approximate number of years since the start of the U.S. operation in Iraq

4,487
Number of U.S. deaths as of Thursday, according to the Pentagon

31,921
Confirmed U.S. military wounded (hostile) as of Nov. 29, according to the Pentagon

103,775
Approximate number of Iraqi deaths as of Nov. 30 from war-related violence, according to Iraq Body Count

\$805 BILLION
Approximate cost of the war in Iraq as of Nov. 30, according to the National Priorities Project

Please see IRAQ on 9A



In Baghdad, the U.S. flag, Iraq flag, and the U.S. Forces-Iraq colors are carried during ceremonies Thursday marking the end of the U.S. military mission in Iraq.

The Associated Press

MAGISTRATE JUDGES

3 judges sue over pay raises

County Council rejected the jurists' arguments Nov. 14.

By **KYLE PETERSON**
kpeterson@beaufortgazette.com
843-706-8147

Three Beaufort County magistrate judges have taken the County Council to court over a state-mandated pay raise they say was implemented about three months late.

An attorney for the magistrates presented their case to county officials Nov. 14, but the council did not agree with their arguments.

Now the three magistrates — Beth Prince, David Taub and Lawrence McElynn — have filed an appeal asking a 14th Circuit Court judge to intervene.

No one disputes that state law requires a pay raise for magistrates when a county's population tops 150,000, as Beaufort County's did during the 2010 Census.

The question is when that raise should take effect.

Council approved it effective July 1, the beginning of its fiscal year.

But the magistrates say the raise should have kicked in March 22, when the new census figures became official.

Please see JUDGES on 9A



HOW MUCH ARE THE RAISES?

For all 11 magistrate judges in the county, the additional raise would cost the county about \$20,000.

CHARTER SCHOOL PROPOSAL

Group sets Saturday info session

By **RACHEL HEATON**
rheaton@beaufortgazette.com
843-706-8177

A group aiming to open a new charter school in the area will hold its first public informational meeting this weekend.

The Bridges Preparatory School Organizing Committee has planned a Saturday breakfast meeting to share information about their ideas for a school that eventually would serve students in kindergarten through 12th grade. The meeting will be at 9 a.m. at the Corner Stone Christian Church, 2301 First Blvd., in Beaufort.

Please see SESSION on 9A

SC asks court to allow new illegal immigration law to take effect

The law requires police to check the immigration status of suspects they detain and has been blocked by the Justice Department.

By **BRUCE SMITH**
The Associated Press

CHARLESTON — South Carolina asked a federal judge Thursday to let the state's tough new immigra-

tion law go into effect next month while the U.S. Supreme Court rules on an Arizona law that is nearly identical.

The Justice Department and civil

rights groups have sued in federal court in Charleston to block the law from taking effect New Year's Day.

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley and the state ask the judge in their motion to stay or suspend the court proceedings until the high court rules on the Arizona case. It the stay

is approved, the law would take effect.

The law, similar to ones in Alabama, Utah, Indiana and Georgia, requires police to check the immigration status of suspects they detain.

Please see LAW on 9A

MORE INSIDE

A Justice Department report finds that an Arizona sheriff's office committed civil rights violations against Latinos. **9A**

DEATHS, 4A

James Barrett, 88
Victor Brinkman Jr., 86
Lula Cooler, 90

Clifton Frost, 81
Elijah Jones Jr., 86
Arline Treisch, 96

INSIDE TODAY'S GAZETTE

"New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music" opens Saturday at the Beaufort library. 1C

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"He who wrestles with us strengthens our nerves and sharpens our skill. Our antagonist is our helper." **Edmund Burke**



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