

S.C. tobacco goes to market in Timmonsville

By The Associated Press

South Carolina's estimated \$180 million tobacco crop went to market today, with the staccato chant of auctioneers echoing in warehouses across the Pee Dee.

About 150 people gathered at Gregory's Warehouse on the west end of Timmonsville as the auctions got under way about 8:30 a.m. In a prayer before the sale began, they thanked God "the joy of planting, the pleasure of the harvest and now the joy of marketing."

"The tobacco looks a lot better on the floor than a lot of us expected," state Commissioner of Agriculture Les Tindal said. Tindal predicted this year's crop would probably earn about the same as the 1989 crop, \$1.66 per pound on the average.

Early in the sale at Gregory's, tobacco was

bringing between \$1.50 and \$1.65 per pound.

Tindal said the markets were open two weeks earlier than usual because of the crop matured early in the field, a fact that some farmers have attributed to a lack of rain.

But Tindal also said some farmers needed to get tobacco to market because Hurricane Hugo knocked down many of the sheds and barns they used to store tobacco.

Farmers need to be patient and not rush the crop, Tindal said.

"It will help if we can get farmers to be patient and go fishing for a while. What they need to do is leave it on the stalk until it's ripe," he said. "If farmers bring quality to the warehouse, the buyers will respond."

Forecasts predict this year's harvest will drop about 2 percent from last year, though the

amount of acreage devoted to tobacco rose slightly.

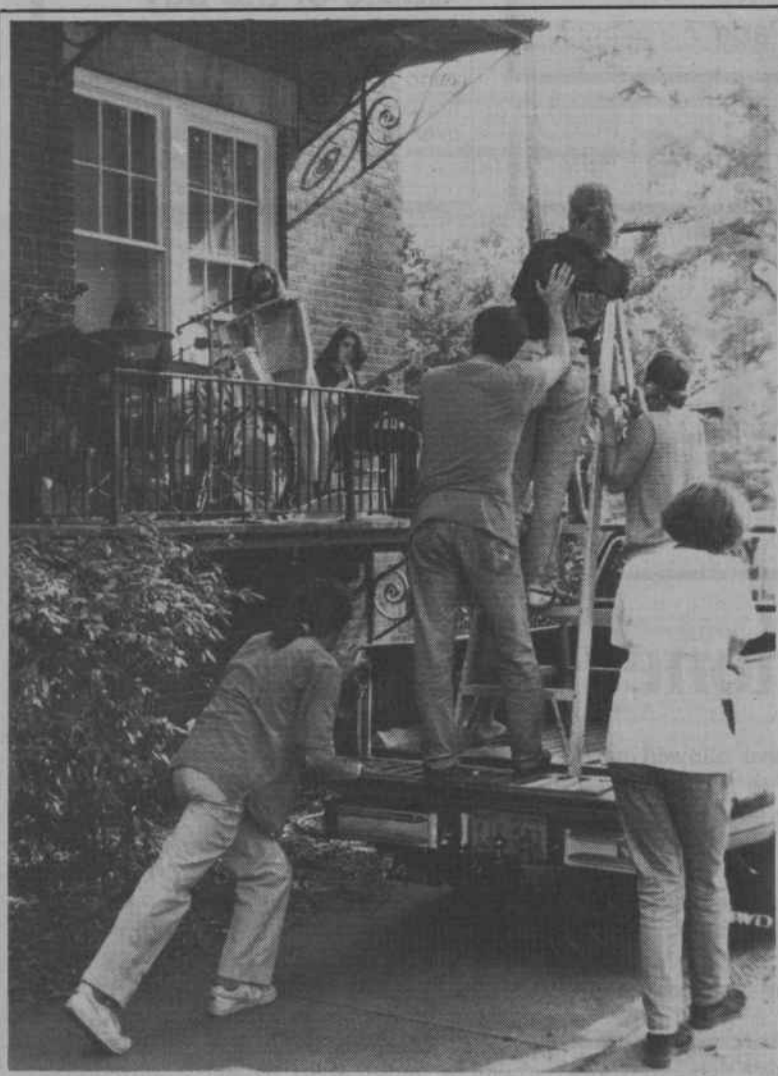
Tindal attributed the increase in acreage to a rise in tobacco exports.

Early in the growing season, agricultural officials estimated this year's leaf crop in South Carolina could be about \$180 million.

Tobacco and its related products generate more than 30,000 jobs and pump more than \$300 million into the state's economy, according to industry estimates.

The state now has seven markets: Conway, Darlington-Timmonsville, Hemingway, Kingstree, Lake City, Loris and Mullins. All opened today except Loris and Kingstree, which open

Wednesday, and Conway, which opens Thursday, officials said.



David R. Owens/The Gamecock

Video killed the radio star

Media arts students assist in the making of a music video of the Columbia band Lay Quiet Awhile. The video is being produced by the Media Institute.

Senators to study Souter before confirmation

By The Associated Press

Senators are reacting cautiously to David H. Souter's nomination to the Supreme Court, not conceding they know little about him even though they confirmed him as a federal appeals judge three months ago.

"I want to get to know him, get to know his record so I can make a considered decision, and I'm sure he'll be fine," Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, said Monday after President Bush chose Souter to succeed retired Justice William Brennan.

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., said senators must "deter-

mine whether he possesses a strong commitment to the fundamental values of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights" while Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill., said he wanted to know more about Souter's record as New Hampshire attorney general.

Sen. Howard Metzenbaum, D-Ohio, called Souter "pretty much of a blank slate."

All four are members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, which will hold confirmation hearings on Souter. There, questions are bound to be raised about his views on abortion and other matters.

Most senators said, however, they would not break tradition and ask Souter point-blank how he would decide the abortion issue if confirmed. But they said the topic was guaranteed to come up.

"People are very much focused on the abortion issue and, frankly, I think that's a mistake," Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., said today on the "CBS This Morning" television show. "I do not think there ought to be a single litmus test for a nominee for the Supreme Court."

That judgment was seconded by Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., who said on CBS: "The president

avoided making this a litmus test candidate. I would hope the Senate would avoid making it a litmus test candidate."

However, Leahy acknowledged earlier that "it would be naive to think that Roe vs. Wade in one form or another is not going to be part of a lot of the questions." He was referring to the 1973 Supreme Court ruling that legalized abortion.

Meanwhile, conservative groups reacted favorably to Souter's appointment while pro-choice and civil rights organizations urged caution.

S.C. legislators trying to find ways to ensure safe driving by the elderly

By The Associated Press

With more older licensed drivers expected to be on the road in the future, South Carolina officials are looking for ways to ensure elderly motorists do not pose safety risks.

One bill that surfaced in the Legislature this year urged South Carolina to join the 13 other states that require older drivers to renew their licenses more frequently than others.

"It just makes good sense," state Sen. Ed Simpson, 74, R-Clemson, said. "We have people with Alzheimers who are driving, for instance. And I had a neighbor, who after he moved away, kept driving back here, because he forgot. It's dangerous, and I don't think it's asking too much."

Simpson's bill to require drivers age 70 and older to have their licenses renewed every other year never made it out of committee. And Simpson just retired from the General Assembly.

In the Upstate three weeks ago, a 75-year-old Inman man drove through a stop sign, struck two cyclists and, apparently unaware anything had happened, continued forward, dragging a 26-year-cyclist for more than 650 feet, according to the Highway Patrol.

The patrol is requiring that the man undergo an evaluation to determine whether he still is fit to drive.

In South Carolina, where the percentage of licensed drivers age 65 and over increased from 8 percent to 12 percent between 1977 and 1989, all drivers renew-

ing their licenses are treated the same, regardless of age.

According to the National Safety Council, of the 64,000 drivers involved in fatal collisions in 1988, 12.8 percent were at least 65 years old, compared with 26.9 percent between the ages of 25-34, the biggest percentage of any age group.

The American Association for Retired Persons considers "mature drivers" to be at least 55 years old.

The organization, which opposes any legislation that treats elderly people differently than other segments of the population, nonetheless agrees that elderly drivers can pose a risk.

Mike Seaton, who developed the AARP's 55 Alive course for elderly drivers, said that while younger drivers account for the greatest number of accidents, elderly drivers drive less.

When the number of miles people drive is factored into statistics, Seaton said that elderly drivers and young drivers come out about equal in terms of the number of accidents in which they're involved in.

He said elderly drivers must be aware their hearing and sight are often not as good as they once were. Arthritis may curtail a driver's ability turn a wheel or look to both sides, and Seaton said aging generally slows one's reaction time, depth of perception or peripheral vision.



David R. Owens/The Gamecock

I owe, I owe...

Finance senior Stacy Applegate leaves for work at Spinnakers, a new restaurant opening today at the Columbiana Centre.

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GHOST No Passes -PG13- 12:00-2:30-5:00-7:35-10:10	BRUCE WILLIS DIE HARD 2 R 12:10-2:40-5:10-7:40-10:15 No Passes
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