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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COLUMBIA, S.C.

## Hodges gets aid from broadcaster

■ Contribution comes as WIS-TV seeks to win state's lottery contract

BY CHARLES PRASHAW  
THE GAMECOCK

The parent company of the state's largest television station, which is seeking to win a valuable lottery contract from the state, contributed \$1,500 to the campaign to re-elect Gov. Jim Hodges. Cosmos Broadcasting Inc., which made the contribution, is based in Greenville and owns WIS-TV. The donation, though legal under state election laws, raises serious ethical questions

about whether news-gathering organizations should contribute money to candidates' campaigns when they're supposed to be objective in reporting about elections.

The contribution was made to the campaign on Dec. 9, around the time WIS announced it was vying to become the sole television station to produce and air drawings for the South Carolina lottery.

If WIS-TV wins the contract, they stand to make substantial profits through increased ratings, advertising dollars and fees from the state lottery.

Allegedly, the contribution was specifically tied to a fund-raiser Hodges held at the Carolina Coliseum in December for his 2002 re-election campaign.

Almost all South Carolina newspapers and

television stations have policies or traditions barring political donations in order to avoid appearing biased.

But Cosmos Broadcasting President James Keelor donated \$100 to the campaign to re-elect David Beasley in 1998.

General Manager of WIS-TV John Cottingham was unavailable for comment as of press time.

In *The State*, which broke the story, Cottingham said, "We try to stay out of all political campaigns and not give the impression we support one candidate."

Cottingham also told *The State* that the contribution to Hodges' campaign most likely came from Hayne Hipp, the CEO of Liberty Corp., the company that owns Cosmos Broadcasting.

Hipp was also unavailable for comment as of

press time.

But *The State* had some of its own ethical questions to answer when it was reported last year that the newspaper's parent company, Knight-Ridder, flew Gov. David Beasley to Washington, D.C. on a private company jet to attend a National Press Club dinner.

Some local journalists are critical of the WIS-TV contribution because the company acted wrongly according to guidelines established by The Society of Professional Journalists.

The SPJ Code of Ethics, which both broadcasters and print journalists follow, says, "journalists should avoid all conflicts of interest, real or perceived."

WOLO-TV General Manager David Dodds said

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## USC FUNDING CUTS

### Budget forecast remains cloudy

BY BRANDON LARRABEE  
THE GAMECOCK

Those involved in USC's budget process say the university administration hasn't decided what programs to cut if the state legislature approves a plan that would slash the university's appropriations by as much as 15 percent.

While USC President John Palms and Provost Jerry Odom have the ultimate say about the university's budget, interviews with advisers to Palms and Odom give an idea of what the university might trim if cuts become necessary.

However, advisers said university cuts would be based on the size of the reductions the legislature makes in the budget. They also cautioned that any talk of what might be done if the budget is cut is premature.

Associate Provost John Olsgaard said the provost's office had asked all departments of the university to budget for a 5 and a 10 percent cut in their strategic plans. The strategic plans include each unit's request for funding.

No other definite steps have been taken to plan for possible cuts, Olsgaard said. "Otherwise, it's very difficult to plan on a number you don't know," he said.

Olsgaard said it was difficult to think about the size of the possible cuts. A 15 percent cut would mean the university would get \$23 million less in state funding next year.

"It's hard to get your arms

**BUDGET** SEE PAGE 2

## Sigma Chi to kick off weeklong Derby Days

BY CRISTY INFINGER  
THE GAMECOCK

Sigma Chi Derby Days, a week of events held to raise money for the Children's Miracle Network, begins today.

The week is packed with activities, such as a cookout, "silver sabotage" and skits. The events aren't just for friendly competition, though — the proceeds from the week will go to the Children's Miracle Network.

"Sigma Chi Derby Days is a nationally run event with competition between sororities to have fun, all benefiting our chosen philanthropy, the Children's Miracle Network," Sigma Chi president Michael Berger said.

Today, there will be a kickoff cookout and derby decorating contest in the Sigma Chi lounge from 6-8 p.m. The derbies, stiff felt hats with round crowns, will be displayed tomorrow on Greene Street during the Silver Sabotage.

Silver Sabotage is an event to raise money while getting rid of loose change. Each sorority is assigned a bucket where people are invited to drop pennies that count toward a score. Sororities put silver change, checks and bills into other groups' buckets, and this money counts against them.

Each event of the week will earn points for the sororities. Points are earned through participation, money raised by silver sabotage, balloon sales and individual contests.

Besides the planned events, sororities will be asked to sell balloons printed with the Children's Miracle Network logo for a dollar each.

Members of Sigma Chi are expected to sell at least \$50 worth of balloons and to "coach" the participants through the week's events and about the point system.

Last year, Kappa Delta sorority won Derby Days. This year they're out to defend their title.

"We are really excited and know that winning for the third year in a row will be hard, but we are putting up a unified front and the chapter is really getting involved," Kappa Delta president Katie Gomez said. "Hopefully, we will be able to defend our title."

As the week goes by, other events will take place, such as a derby hunt Wednesday on the Horseshoe.

The week's festivities will culminate Thursday at Airband with a combination concert, skit show and award presentation. The winners will be announced, and the band Gran Torino will perform.

The university desk can be reached at [gamecockcitydesk@hotmail.com](mailto:gamecockcitydesk@hotmail.com)

## RIVERBANKS ZOO EXPANSION PROJECT



Special to The Gamecock

The first component of the Riverbanks Zoo expansion project is a 12,000-square foot birdhouse, which includes the Asian Trek (above). The giant hornbill and the Bali mynah, both endangered species, are featured at the Asian Trek.

## Birds of a Feather

BY MARUXA RELANO  
THE GAMECOCK

As a crowd of parents and children gathered in front of the penguin tank to watch the Saturday morning feeding, it was clear that Riverbanks Zoo's new penguin exhibit was popular with visitors.

Penguin Coast is part of the zoo's new 12,000-square foot birdhouse, which is the first major component of the zoo's \$19 million expansion project. This summer, the project will bring gorillas to Columbia for the first time.

The new birdhouse also includes Asian Trek, featuring birds such as the giant hornbill and the Bali mynah, both endangered species.

Savanna Camp showcases birds of the arid African and South American savannas.

At Conservation Crossroads, visitors can learn about several conservation programs and make on-the-spot donations to the program of their choice.

Riverbanks Zoo leads the Bali mynah species survival plan, a nationwide program that man-

ages mynahs in American zoos as a single population and aims to re-introduce them to their natural habitat.

Saturday, the animal keepers answered questions and taught the audience about the birds through a headset from the other side of the glass.

Parents seemed to listen more than their children, but the children stared through the glass wall separating them from the penguins and watched without losing interest.

Penguin Coast is a multisensory home of two kinds of warm-water penguins: South African penguins and rock-hopper penguins from the Falkland Islands, off the coast of Argentina.

The penguins are showcased behind a 65-foot-long glass pane that allows visitors to see the birds "fly" underwater and hop on land.

Riverbanks Zoo spokeswoman Sharon Sossamon said they're training the penguins to respond to certain orders, such as to get out of the water for feeding when the keepers blow a whistle.

"We have one penguin that is better 'humanized' than others," Sossamon said. "We are hoping the rest follow her example."

Larry Forsyth works as an education volunteer at the zoo. He said he finds his work a rewarding experience.

"I really enjoy volunteering here," Forsyth said, "I come twice a week and do different jobs."

Saturday, Forsyth demonstrated penguins' insulation system with two double-layered plastic bags: one with fat in it, one empty. Visitors put one hand in each bag before submerging the bags in iced water and found that their hands kept warmer in the fat-lined bag.

The remaining components of the zoo's expansion project — the botanical garden entrance, the elephant and gorilla exhibits and the African village — will open to the public in spring and summer.

The city desk can be reached at [gamecockcitydesk@hotmail.com](mailto:gamecockcitydesk@hotmail.com)

### WEATHER



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### COMING UP



A look at USC's use of information technology

WEDNESDAY

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Education consists mainly of what we have unlearned."

— Mark Twain

### ONLINE POLL



Should USC include sexual orientation in its anti-discrimination policy?

Vote at [www.dailygamecock.com](http://www.dailygamecock.com). Results will be published Friday.

**COLLEGES** SEE PAGE 3

## Committee denounces budget cut proposal

BY VALERIE MATCHETTE  
THE GAMECOCK

The state's pending budget cuts and their effect on state-funded colleges was the topic of discussion at the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education's meeting Thursday.

At the beginning of the year, the governor proposed drastic budget cuts to make up for financial deficits stemming from a nationwide economic slowdown. USC President John Palms has said the 15 percent across-the-board cuts would be devastating to USC and other state-supported institutions.

Dalton Floyd Jr., chairman of the Higher Education Commission, spoke about the potential cutbacks.

"Once again, higher education in South Carolina finds itself in a difficult position relative to state funding, which makes it even more important for us to speak with a common voice on critical issues," Floyd said.

He compared South Carolina's budget woes to those in neighboring states and pointed to North Carolina's policy, which compensated for budget deficits without significantly impacting higher