

# All SC residents age 16 and up eligible for COVID-19 shots

Staff Report

Starting today, all South Carolinians age 16 and over are eligible to receive the vaccine and can start scheduling their appointments, Gov. Henry McMaster and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control announced Friday. "Our priority with the vaccine has been to save the lives of those at the greatest risk of dying. By staying the course and resisting distractions, we've expanded South Carolinians' access and eligibility for vaccinations faster than originally anticipated," said Gov. Henry McMaster. "Thanks to the tremendous efforts of our state's health care professionals, we are now able to make the vaccine

available to anyone who wants it, and to do so ahead of schedule." On March 8, South Carolina moved into Phase 1b of the vaccination plan, which allowed those 55 and older, everyone with increased risk for severe COVID-19 disease, and all front-line workers with increased occupational risk to receive the vaccine. Since then, DHEC and other vaccine providers have administered an average of 23,323 doses per day, totaling 419,816 administered doses since March 8. "Thanks to the outstanding work of many people, including volunteers, community groups, vaccine providers, and especially the people of South Carolina, we have given over 1.8 million doses of vaccine to over 1.1 mil-

lion South Carolinians in just over three months," said Simmer. In all, DHEC and other vaccine providers have administered a total of 1,818,939 doses of vaccine to South Carolina residents, with 1,163,103 South Carolinians having received at least one dose and 617,787 South Carolinians having completed their vaccinations. As of today, approximately 15% of South Carolina's population has been fully vaccinated. Currently, Pfizer is the only vaccine available to those aged 16-18. All three vaccines — Pfizer, Moderna and Janssen — are available to those aged 18 and older. Check with your health care provider to determine which vaccine they are administering if you are in the younger age group.



MATT BISE/STAFF



GRACE BEAHM ALFORD/POST AND COURIER

Traffic on Berlin G. Myers parkway in Summerville.

## SCDOT holds hearing on changes to Berlin Myers Parkway

BY ABIGAIL HUTCHINSON  
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A virtual meeting will be hosted by the South Carolina Department of Transportation regarding the Berlin Myers Parkway project. The meeting will be available for access on the projects website starting on March 30 through April 14. Joy Riley, SCDOT project manager, said that after the public hearing in January 2020, the review of permit applications determined there would need to be some additional changes to the project plans. The public hearing has been called, Riley says, to inform the public that there will be changes involving more work with flood control near the roadway project.

"After that meeting, in the review of our permit applications, it was determined that some additional flood mitigation work needed to be performed in the channel downstream of the roadway project," Riley said.

The SCDOT says that the strategies involve construction activities along the Sawmill Branch to Dorchester Road in order to improve the regulation of floodwaters.

Records show that the phase one of the Berlin Myers parkway project the project was completed back in 1990, when the first segments of the roadway were built from US 17 A in Summerville all the way to US 78. Later, phase two of the project finished construction in 1995 when US 78 in Summerville was connected to E Carolina Avenue. Both were created as an alternate route to the more congested US 17A.

Now in the third and final phase of the project, the SCDOT is working on to finalize plans for construction that would extend from E. Carolina Avenue to reconnect with US 17 A, at the intersection with W Fisher Road.

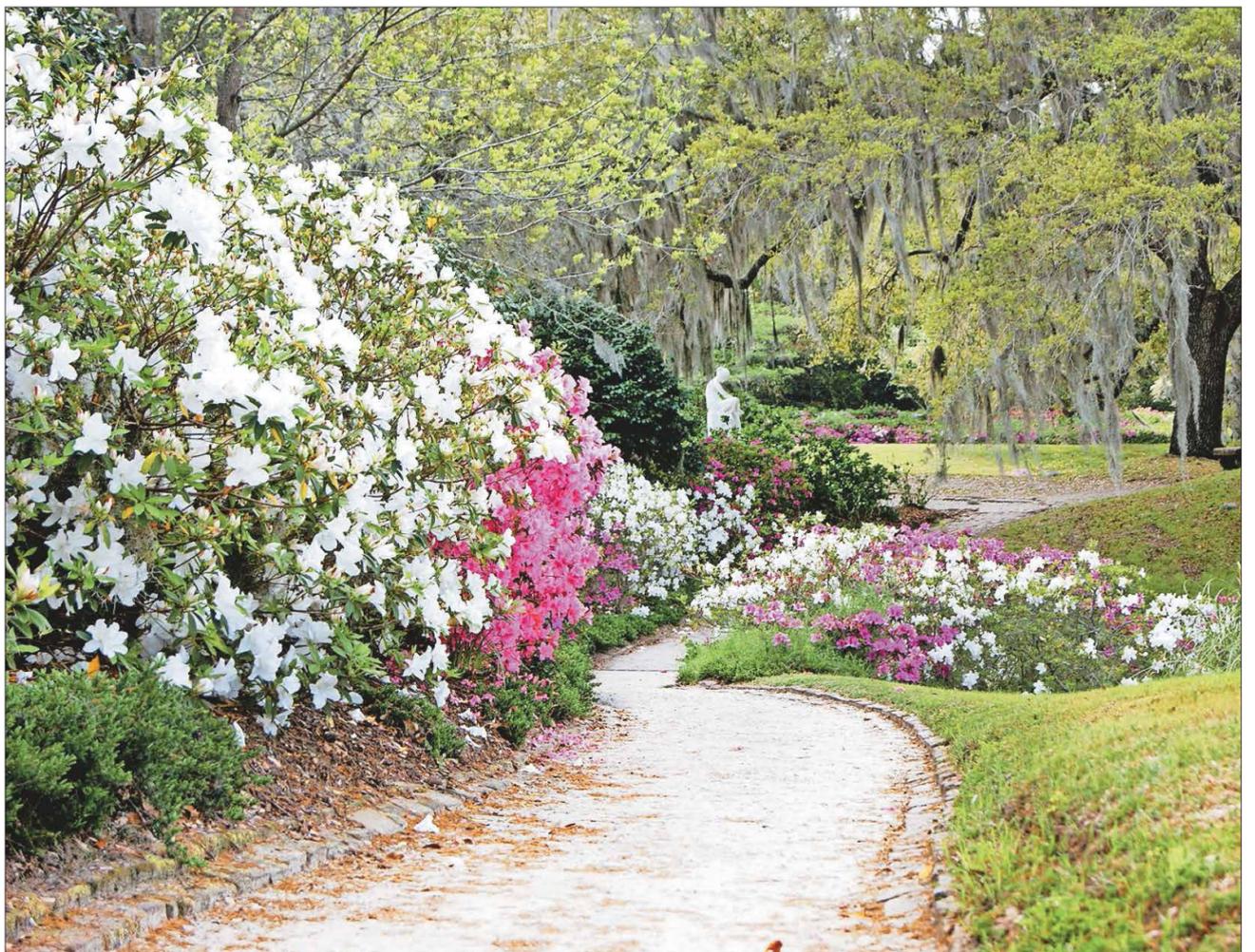


PHOTO PROVIDED

Above the Mill Pond at Middleton Place, over 40,000 azaleas will blossom for visitors for weeks to come.

# Spring brings hope to gardens

BY MATT BISE  
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On March 23, 2020, at 3 p.m. Middleton Place, National Historic Site in Dorchester County completely shut down because of the pandemic. A couple of months later it reopened but the closing at the height of the spring time tourist season left the thousands of blooming azaleas with no audience. In 2020 the usual 100,000 visitors dropped by 30 percent.

It's a new year and now things are beginning to loosen up at the site just as the flowers begin to bloom. The freeze Covid-19 put local tourism is beginning to thaw. People are back to planning weddings and roaming the 110 acres of wide open space.

"Certainly at Middleton Place we have so much

space that there's no worry about social distancing. People are just grateful they can be outdoors with their families," said Beth Kerrigan, Director of Development at Middleton Place Foundation. "I talked to some people today from Indiana and New York; lots of families traveling. We're seeing lots of families."

For lovers of beauty and history, there may be no better time to visit Middleton Place than in the weeks and months ahead. In 1941 the Garden Club of America declared that Middleton Place had not only the oldest, but also the most important and most interesting garden in America. The over 100,000 azaleas in the Gardens will now has an audience.

Sidney Frazier, Vice President of Horticulture, explained that there will almost certainly be camellias in bloom in late March and perhaps be-

yond. "Given the unpredictable weather the Low Country has recently experienced, mother nature is still in control," says Frazier. He is optimistic that visitors who missed the beauty of Middleton Place in the spring last year due to the pandemic will not be disappointed with how 2021 is shaping up.

It's the same in Berkeley County at one of its well know attractions in Moncks Corner, Cypress Gardens. Over the years the attraction that offers boat rides in the swamp, miles of walking trails and South Carolina's largest alligator in captivity, has had a run of bad luck, long before the pandemic.

In 2014 a train hit a bridge knocking it out for six months forcing visitors to take a detour to the park that problem lowered visitation numbers but the

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# 437th Airlift Wing conducts all-female flights

BY DIANA COSSABOOM  
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Women assigned to the 437th Airlift Wing conducted two all-female flights to commemorate Women's History Month at Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, March 15 and 17.

The first all-female C-17 flight crew conducted an aerial refueling with a KC-135 from the 171st Air Refueling Wing, Pittsburg, Pa., and carried 20 women assigned to various units across Joint Base Charleston.

The second flight included two all-female crews who piloted a two-ship

C-17 formation, where they flew to Pope Army Airfield, North Carolina, to conduct an airdrop with 80 female 82nd Airborne Division paratroopers, and an aerial refueling with a KC-135 also from the 171st ARW.

Due to weather constraints, the airdrop portion was canceled for the safety of the paratroopers.

"The fact that it is an all-female aircrew in both jets and it's all female jumpers is a huge deal because all of these women have gone through so many hurdles in order to be in their positions, be qualified, and be the tactical air women that they are," said Capt. Alisha Stroble, 16th Airlift Squadron deputy chief of tactics and C-17 pilot.

Females make up approximately 20 percent of the Air Force and 15 percent of the Army. Of the 20 percent of females in the Air Force, approximately 1 percent are pilots.

"It's really incredible to celebrate all the women who have gone before us, and open these doors for us that we [now] can put together a mission completely crewed by females in what is typically a more male setting," said Staff Sgt. Rachel Pye, 4th Combat Camera Squadron aerial photojournalist.

In 1975, then-Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David C. Jones, launched a test program that would enable women to enter pilot training and staff the all-volunteer force. By Sept. 26, 1976, 10 women began pilot training and trail blazed the future of women in the Air Force.

"Being on this jump means to me empowerment," said Command Sgt. Maj. Tonya Sims, command sergeant major for the 407th Brigade Support Battalion. "It lets me know that the 82nd Airborne Division, Center of the Universe, sees me and hears me. They know that I can and I will get it done."



US AIR FORCE/STAFF SGT. RACHEL PYE

Women assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division, Pope Army Airfield, N.C., and 437th Airlift Wing, Joint Base Charleston, participated in an all-female flight in commemoration of Women's History Month.

