

March
13 - 19
2025

Volume 6 Issue 71

The Woodruff Times

\$1



Spring Fling
Noon to 6 pm
This Saturday Downtown Woodruff

Women's Tea Party Inspires Local Community

By: Katina Rice-Davis, Staff Writer
katina@thewoodrufftimes.com
On Saturday, March 1, 2025, the New Hope Baptist Church, Cross Anchor, SC Women's Ministry hosted a highly successful Women's Tea Party, attracting approximately 45 women from the local community.

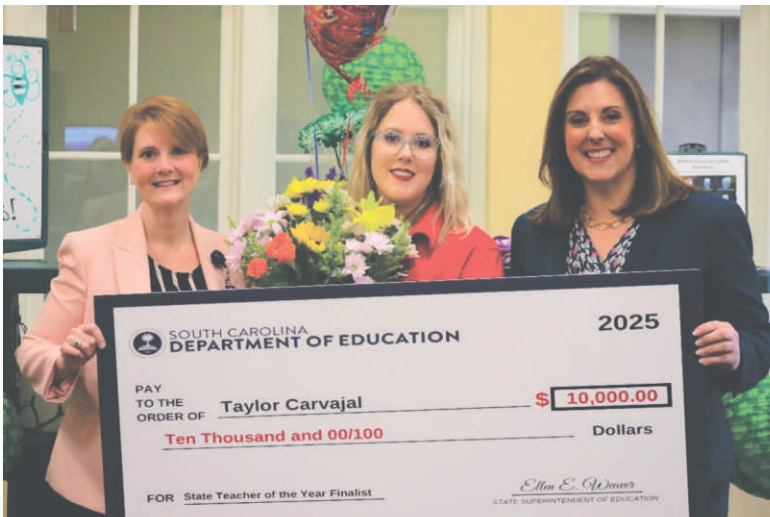
The event's theme, "What Is Your Story?" highlighted the significance of sharing personal testimonies of God's love and goodness. Merica Dyar, Worship Leader at Joanna First Baptist Church, led the group in praise and worship music.
Raileigh Flaniken and her mother, Jamie Flaniken, delivered inspiring testimonies of faith and perseverance

amidst the serious health challenges Raileigh faced. The Flaniken family also shared the heartwarming story of Raileigh's sister, Jessie's adoption, showcasing God's love and providence in their lives.
Instead of ticket sales, attendees brought non-perishable food items to support New Hope's Blessing Box, a valuable community resource providing accessible food for those in need in the community.
The event was praised for its blend of food, fellowship, praise, worship, and mission focus. Attendees departed feeling inspired and uplifted, encouraged to share their own stories of God's goodness with others.



Front row left to right Martha Williams, Bella Gwinn, Susan McCarley, Leslie Wiley, Beth Wiley, Katie Freeman
Back row left to right Anna Beth Brewington, Patti Tucker, Ashley Hughes, Melanie Samol, Amy West, Christie Cannady

S.C. School for the Deaf and the Blind Educator Named State Teacher of the Year Finalist



Pictured: left to right Jolene Madison, Taylor Carvajal and SC Superintendent of Education Ellen Weaver
SPARTANBURG, S.C. – Taylor Carvajal, a dedicated educator at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind (SCSDB), has been named a finalist for the South Carolina Teacher of the Year award. Her passion for teaching and commitment to empowering students with visual and hearing impairments has earned her this prestigious recognition.
Carvajal's work is deeply personal—she was inspired by her legally blind grandparents to pursue a career in special education. She now teaches high school Employability and Instructional Support, helping students develop essential life and job skills. Additionally, she provides vision services to students who are deaf-blind at SCSDB's Applied Academic Center, ensuring they have the tools needed to navigate life with confidence.
Carvajal's journey in education is marked by a strong academic background and a drive to serve students with unique needs.

Weather Mar. 13 - Mar. 19

13	14	15	16	17	18	19
73° 48°	73° 54°	78° 59°	76° 44°	69° 43°	72° 48°	75° 53°

Pi Day is celebrated annually on March 14th (3/14) because the date represents the first three digits of pi (π), which is approximately 3.14.

District Approves Bond for Regular Maintenance and Capital Projects

By: Jeremy Handel, Staff Writer
jeremy@thewoodrufftimes.com

The Spartanburg County School District Four Board of Trustees unanimously approved a bond resolution to provide funds for capital expenditures and maintenance projects. Officials also appointed two representatives to the RD Anderson Educational Foundation.

The general obligation bond resolution is approved every two years to provide the needed funding for the upkeep of the district's schools. The \$1.45 million bond will be divided to pay off last year's bond anticipation note and provide funds for the coming year's note. The board approved the bond with First Citizens Bank at 3.93 percent interest.

Board members also approved the appointment of Chair Tony Davis and Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance Chris Benfield to represent District Four on the

newly created RD Anderson Educational Foundation. The new body will oversee the construction of the expansion at RD Anderson. The school requested two members from each district that utilize RD Anderson, with one being the chief financial officer of each district.

In other business, the board approved a measure to request the state board of education forgive the district for three absent days incurred after Hurricane Helene. The district board has already forgiven three days, and the district has scheduled three make-up days, which is required in order to request forgiveness from the state. The make-up days will be on February 14, March 14, and May 21.

In-school reports:

Woodruff Primary School reported holding its science fair on February 17 and 18, with 14 students participating. The top three finishers in each category advance to the Piedmont Region III Science Fair at USC Upstate.

Woodruff Elementary School reported that third-grade students worked on a research project and presentation for Black History Month, each reporting on a historical or noteworthy figure. The elementary school will hold its Family Game Night on March 20.

Woodruff Middle School reported that the girls' basketball team won the Foothills tournament. Four WMS students attended the region band clinic: Cordelia Liggett, Cooper Zal, Hayden Bean, and Jocelyn Gomez.

Woodruff High School reported a career fair featuring 50 vendors in February. The Art Society hosted the annual Empty Bowls Luncheon.

The District Four Trustees meet on the first Monday of each month at 6 p.m. in the district office. The meetings are open to the public. Due to the spring break schedule, the next meeting will be held on Monday, March 31.

RD Anderson to Expand with 48,600 Square Feet of New Classroom Space

By: Tracy Sanders, Co-Editor
tracy@thewoodrufftimes.com

The RD Anderson Educational Foundation is spearheading a major expansion of R.D. Anderson, adding 48,600 square feet of new classroom space. This addition will include flexible spaces designed to accommodate future programs, ensuring the facility remains adaptable to evolving educational needs.

Spartanburg County is one of the fastest-growing areas in the state, with new businesses, industries, and

manufacturing opportunities continuing to emerge. As employment demands rise, RD Anderson's mission remains focused on providing local industries with qualified and certified employees. To meet these needs and maintain a competitive edge in career and technology education, RD Anderson is moving forward with this expansion.

According to Omar Daniels, who oversees the RD Anderson Educational Foundation, this marks the first expansion to RD

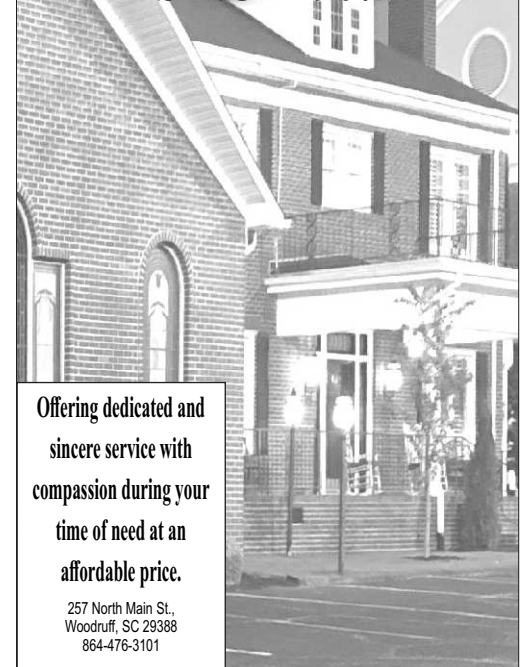
Anderson in over a decade. The last addition, completed in 2012, added 25,000 square feet of classroom space. With bids for the new expansion expected to go out in June and construction set to begin in the fall, the new space is projected to be ready for use in the 2026-2027 school year.

The expansion will provide over 1,200 additional students from Spartanburg School Districts four, five, and six with access to the center.

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The Woodruff Times is published once a month.
Website: thewoodrufftimes.com
Postage paid at USPS Woodruff, SC.
Printed by Laurens Advertiser

P: 864-978-4167 or
803-931-2601



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Woodruff Man Arrested for Domestic Violence and Animal Cruelty



Larry Davis Booking Photo (photo from SCSO)
BY: Tracy Sanders, Co-Editor
tracy@thewoodrufftimes.com
WOODRUFF, SC – A local man,

Larry Davis has been arrested and charged with domestic violence and animal cruelty after deputies responded to a domestic disturbance and uncovered evidence of pet abuse.

On March 9, 2025, at approximately 7:35 p.m., Spartanburg County deputies arrived at a residence on Highway 101 following a report of a domestic disturbance. During the investigation, authorities were made aware of repeated abuse of a household dog. Video evidence from January 19, 2025, documented Davis violently slamming the dog onto the living room floor and, in a separate instance, choking the animal by its collar, restricting its airway.

Additional footage reportedly shows Davis grabbing the dog’s ear and pinning it back, while someone in the video can be heard pleading for the abuse to stop and expressing concern that the dog was unable to breathe.

Following the investigation, Davis was arrested on March 10, 2025. He has been charged with domestic violence in the second degree and animal cruelty/torture.

South Carolina law takes cases of animal abuse and neglect seriously. Under SC Code § 47-1-40, it is illegal to torture, abuse, or intentionally inflict harm on an animal. Violations of this law can result in misdemeanor or felony charges, depending on the severity of

the abuse.

In cases of intentional cruelty—such as those involving torture—offenders may face felony charges punishable by up to five years in prison and substantial fines. Courts may also impose restrictions on pet ownership for individuals convicted of animal cruelty.

Animal welfare advocates stress the importance of reporting suspected abuse to local authorities. Anyone who suspects animal cruelty in Spartanburg County is encouraged to contact law enforcement or local animal control agencies.

Authorities have not released additional details regarding the suspect’s court proceedings. The case remains under investigation.

How to Report Animal Cruelty in S.C.

BY: Tracy Sanders, Co-Editor
tracy@thewoodrufftimes.com

Animal cruelty is a serious crime that can result in severe penalties, including fines and jail time. If you suspect an animal is being abused or neglected, reporting it can help save a life. South Carolina law provides protections for animals and allows concerned citizens to take action when they witness mistreatment.

What is Considered Animal Cruelty?

Under South Carolina Code § 47-1-40, animal cruelty includes but is not limited to:

- Physical abuse, such as hitting, kicking, or choking an animal
- Neglect, including failure to provide food, water, shelter, or medical care
- Torture, such as intentionally causing pain or suffering
- Abandonment, leaving an animal without proper care
- Inhumane confinement, such as keeping an animal in unsanitary or dangerous conditions

How to Report Suspected Animal Abuse

If you suspect animal cruelty, take action immediately by reporting it to the proper authorities. Here’s how:

1. Contact Local Law Enforcement
 - Call the Spartanburg County Sheriff’s Office at

(864) 503-4500 or your local police department.

- If it is an emergency where an animal is in immediate danger, call 911.

2. Report to Animal Control or Animal Welfare Organizations

- Spartanburg County Environmental Enforcement: (864) 596-3582
- Greenville Humane Society: (864) 242-3626
- Speak for Animals (SC animal welfare group): (864) 421-0022

3. Gather Evidence

- If it is safe to do so, take photos or videos of the abuse.

- Document dates, times, locations, and descriptions of the incidents.

- Note any witnesses who may be willing to provide statements.

4. Remain Anonymous if Needed

- Many reporting agencies allow anonymous tips.
- You do not have to give your name if you fear retaliation.

What Happens After You Report?

Once a report is filed, authorities will investigate and determine whether the animal is in immediate danger. If necessary, they may remove the animal from the abusive situation and pursue criminal charges against the offender.

Why Reporting Matters

Animals depend on humans for their well-being,

and speaking up can prevent suffering. Many cases of animal cruelty are linked to domestic violence, meaning that reporting abuse can also protect vulnerable people in the home.

If you see something, say something. Your report could be the difference between life and death for an animal in distress.

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Hummingbirds Set to Return to Upstate S.C.: How to Welcome These Tiny Travelers

By: Tracy Sanders, Staff Writer
tracy@thewoodrufftimes.com

As spring approaches, residents of Upstate South Carolina can look forward to the return of one of nature's most fascinating visitors—the ruby-throated hummingbird. These tiny, energetic birds migrate thousands of miles from their wintering grounds in Central America and begin arriving in our region as early as mid-March, with the majority appearing by early April.

When to Put Out Hummingbird Feeders

To attract hummingbirds as soon as they arrive, experts recommend putting out feeders in mid-March. Males typically arrive first to establish territory, followed by females a few weeks later. Keeping feeders available early ensures they find a reliable food source as they

recover from their long journey.

Safe and Nutritious Food for Hummingbirds

The best food for hummingbirds is a simple homemade nectar made from a mixture of four parts water to one part white granulated sugar. Boil the water, stir in the sugar until fully dissolved, and let it cool before filling your feeder. Avoid using red dye, honey, or artificial sweeteners, as these can be harmful to the birds. Regularly clean feeders with warm, soapy water to prevent mold growth and bacteria.

Plants That Attract Hummingbirds

In addition to feeders, planting a hummingbird-friendly garden can help attract and support these birds throughout the season. Some of the best native and ornamental plants include:

Bee Balm, Cardinal Flower,

Trumpet Vine, Salvia, Coral, Honeysuckle, Red Columbine, Butterfly Bush, Lantana

These plants produce nectar-rich flowers that naturally draw hummingbirds while also supporting pollinators like bees and butterflies.

Fascinating Facts About Hummingbirds

· Hummingbirds can hover in place, fly backward, and even upside down, thanks to their unique wing structure.

· Their wings beat an astonishing 50–80 times per second.

· A hummingbird's heart rate can reach

1,200 beats per minute while flying.

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Lady Wolverine Soccer Dismantles Clinton in Season Opener

By: Garrett Mitchell, Staff Writer
garrett@thewoodrufftimes.com

After a down year in 2024, a season riddled with injuries and bad luck, the Lady Wolverine soccer team roared back with a vengeance in their season opener, beating Clinton 7-0 last Friday night.

Woodruff, who won 21 consecutive region championships and two upper-state titles between 2003 and 2023, saw that unprecedented streak end last season. But the Lady Wolverines look well on their way to potentially starting another one.

Woodruff jumped out to a 3-0 halftime lead on goals by Peyton Cox, Kaelyn Glass, and Tara

Sharpe.

From there, the deluge only got stronger. The Lady Wolverines poured on four more scores in the final 20 minutes, with Cox and Glass scoring their second goals of the night, along with scores by Abigail Matthews and Nallely Perez.

Woodruff head coach Jorge Santos was happy with how his team played.

“The girls played with intensity and purpose on Friday night,” he said. Our coaching staff was very pleased with how we played. We are looking forward to building on this win as we play Union County on Tuesday.”



Lady Wolverine Soccer Team (photo courtesy of Head Coach Jorge Santos)

Woodruff Baseball Shines in Steve Sanders Tournament



Woodruff senior Zach Kehn delivers a pitching during the Steve Sanders baseball tournament.(photo courtesy of Tara Schubach)

By: Garrett Mitchell, Staff Writer
garrett@thewoodrufftimes.com

The Woodruff baseball team is off to a tremendous start to the 2025

season, putting together a powerful showing in the prestigious Steve Sanders Tournament, which features many of the top teams in the Upstate.

The Wolverines finished the tournament with a 3-1 record and officially finished in 5th place with statement victories over two 5A powerhouses, Riverside and J.L. Mann. The only setback for Woodruff was a 5-3 loss to 5A Byrnes, though the Wolverines led the entire game until the final inning.

Woodruff started the tournament with a convincing 8-2 win over 3A St. Joseph's. Senior Zach Kehn picked up the win on the mound. Jackson Richards went 2-3 with a double, Connor Kelley recorded two hits, and junior

shortstop Kayden Barnaby hit a double.

The Wolverines followed that victory with an 8-6 win over perennial 5A power Riverside, paced by Kelley who earned the win. In that game, Connor Hitchcock was a perfect 3-3 and Luke Cooper added a big hit.

The only setback came against Byrnes, also ranked in the top five of 5A, when Woodruff took a 3-0 lead into the late innings only to see the Rebels club two home runs in the seventh to take a come-from-behind win. But the Wolverines would rebound two days later in perhaps their most impressive victory, not just in the tournament but in years.

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The Woodruff Times

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Woodruff Soccer Takes Down Travelers Rest, Clinton to Open Season

By: Garrett Mitchell, Staff Writer
garrett@thewoodrufftimes.com

The two-time defending region champion Woodruff boys' soccer team is off to another flying start in 2025. The Wolverines defeated Travelers Rest and Clinton in the season's first week as the Wolverines look primed for another highly successful season.

In the opener, Woodruff took it to the powerful Devil Dogs from Travelers Rest. Carlos Garcia scored two goals, Tavo Bastos scored a goal and added an assist, and the Wolverines got a goal each from Eric Perez and Sergio Quijano.

Max Perez and Diego Delfin each contributed an assist.

Against Clinton, it was timely offense and smothering defense that helped down the Red Devils. Bastos scored twice and chipped in with an assist, while Max Perez found the back of the net as well.

Added assists were Max Perez, Juan Pineda, and Alex Garcia.

Head coach Aaron Chappell says that hard work from his team has helped lead to another hot start to the campaign.

"It's still early in the season, but these young men have been working hard since the conclusion of last season," he explained. "They are dedicated to one another and working hard toward growing one percent better each day. The guys played well in our opening week and we have a lot of work to do in order to be more consistent, and we will get there."

The Wolverines have three games this week, all on the road, against Union County, Landrum, and High Point Academy. Woodruff will next be at home against Newberry on March 19.

"I am excited to see (the team's) improvement as we move through the coming weeks of the season," added Chappell. "It is a big match against Union County to open region play."



(2024)- Tavo Bastos (photo courtesy of Woodruff Soccer Instagram)

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Teacher of The Year from front page

She holds a bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education from North Greenville University and a master’s in Special Education from Converse University. To further her expertise, she obtained certification as a Teacher of the Visually Impaired from USC Upstate, allowing her to offer specialized instruction.

Her lessons go beyond traditional academics, focusing on workplace readiness, self-advocacy, and daily living skills—preparing students for independent and fulfilling lives beyond high school.

State Superintendent of Education Ellen Weaver commended Carvajal’s contributions, saying,

"Taylor has dedicated her career to ensuring that every student has the skills and confidence to lead a successful life beyond high school regardless of their circumstances. Inspired by her own family’s experiences, Taylor brings a passion and personal connection to her work, empowering her students to navigate the world with independence."

SCSDB President Jolene Madison echoed these

Steve Sanders Tournament from page 5

Facing 5A number two ranked J.L. Mann, Woodruff jumped ahead 3-0 only to see the Patriots rally to within a run, but a great defensive play saw the tying runner picked off third base in the final inning to quash the threat. The Wolverines took down the Patriots’ ace, who is committed to Western Carolina, and Hitchcock, a senior, earned the winning tossing six sterling innings.

“It really is a testament to these guys and how hard they have worked,” said Woodruff head coach Wesley Brown. “From the first year, these last two senior classes have set the

RD Anderson from page 2

sentiments, highlighting Carvajal’s dedication to individualized learning.

"Taylor’s approach to education truly embodies our focus on engaging, empowering, and equipping students for success. She is intentional in designing learning opportunities that meet students where they are while setting a high standard for growth and excellence."

As a finalist, Carvajal will receive a \$10,000 award and advance to the final stage of the Teacher of the Year competition, where she will interview with a panel of expert judges.

The winner, to be announced April 24 in Columbia, will receive a total of \$25,000 and a brand-new BMW to use during their one-year tenure as South Carolina’s Teacher of the Year. In this role, they will serve as a roving ambassador for the state’s 64,000 educators, mentoring teachers, speaking at events, and leading initiatives to support the profession.

Regardless of the final outcome, Carvajal’s impact on her students and the SCSDB community is already a victory—one that will continue to shape lives for years to come.

tone, and we have increased our win total (in the Steve Sanders Tournament) each of the last two seasons. The culture is being set, and we can compete against anyone we play.”

The schedule does not get any easier for the Wolverines, with a monster slate of upcoming games this week, including home and away games with 3A number five-ranked Fox Creek and a tilt against Blacksburg. But Coach Brown is confident in his squad.

“We have a deep lineup and can hit one through nine, and this team can flat-out run the bases,” he said. “We can beat anyone on any given day.”

Animal Cruelty from page 3

High-demand programs such as Agriculture, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Health Science, Mechanics, and Welding will receive additional space, allowing more students to participate. Key highlights include:

- A new culinary kitchen and classroom
- A greenhouse for agricultural programs
- Health Science labs for training CNA and sports medicine students
- A business wing to support students in developing entrepreneurship skills

The addition of these programs will also support partner high schools, including Woodruff High School, Byrnes High School, and Dorman High School, which have reported a growing number of students interested in applied technology programs.

RD Anderson also plans to host business and industry partners in a newly designed multi-purpose space, providing students with opportunities to demonstrate their skills in real-world settings. Additionally, all new spaces will be interconnected and equipped with safety protocols, including the EVOLV security system, ensuring student safety remains a top priority.

The strength of applied technology centers like RD Anderson lies in their ability to provide students with real-world certifications, credentials, work-based learning experiences, and pathways to both higher education and job placement. This expansion will allow RD Anderson to extend these opportunities to even more students in Spartanburg County.

From Spartanburg County School District Four, two representatives have been appointed to serve on the foundation’s board:

- Tony Davis, Chairman Spartanburg District Four School Board
- Chris Benefield, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance

Their involvement will help ensure the expansion aligns with the district’s vision and the needs of local students.

Tony Davis highlighted the impact this expansion will have on increasing student opportunities:

"The upcoming RDA addition will allow over 1,200 additional students from Districts Four, Five, and Six to attend RDA and expand programs that are currently full, including Mechatronics, Welding, and Cosmetology. The expansion will allow our students to be ready to fill the jobs that will be in demand in the future."

Chris Benefield emphasized the importance of R.D. Anderson’s role in job training:

"RDA is a first-rate Career and Technology Center. The proposed expansion will allow the students of District Four to continue to have the best opportunities for job training, work-based experiences, certifications, and credentials."

The expansion represents a significant investment in the community, creating new opportunities for students and enhancing the region’s educational resources.

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The Friends of Ambazonia: Hopeful that the United States will Recognize the Independence of Southern Cameroons (Also known as Ambazonia)

By: Vareva Harris, Co-Editor
and Tracy Sanders, Co-Editor

With relentless hope and determination, the Friends of Ambazonia are urging the Trump administration to recognize the independence of Southern Cameroons, a region they insist has long been misrepresented as a separatist faction of Cameroons. The group maintains that the people of Ambazonia — English-speaking citizens of Southern Cameroons — are not separatists but rather an independent, sovereign nation that was granted independence by the British Government decades ago. Today, they are pleading for America’s support to help restore peace, freedom, and prosperity to their homeland.

The Friends of Ambazonia state that the Southern Cameroonian people have endured decades of conflict, repression, and violence at the hands of French Cameroon after a failed union with the French-speaking region. This union, they argue, has been plagued by war atrocities, marginalization, and economic suppression that have stifled the progress of their people. The situation has now escalated into a violent conflict that has left thousands displaced, communities destroyed, and innocent civilians killed.

The group’s mission is clear: international recognition of Ambazonia as an independent and sovereign nation. According to the Friends of Ambazonia, the region of Southern Cameroons was historically recognized as a separate and self-governing territory under British rule. However, through a series of political and colonial transitions, the people of Southern Cameroons were absorbed into a

forced union with French Cameroon, which has since resulted in political instability and economic stagnation.

“We are not Cameroonian separatists,” a spokesperson for the Friends of Ambazonia stated passionately. “We are the free and sovereign people of Southern Cameroons, we were supposed to be granted our independence by the British. We now seek the world’s recognition of our right to govern ourselves,” Dr. Emmanuel Tita.

The Friends of Ambazonia are now intensifying their outreach efforts to capture the attention and support of President Donald Trump and his administration. They believe that President Trump’s global mission of promoting peace, freedom, and economic development aligns perfectly with their vision for an independent Southern Cameroons. The group hopes that the Trump administration will acknowledge their sovereignty, intervene diplomatically, and help put an end to the violence and oppression imposed by French Cameroon.

In their outreach, the Friends of Ambazonia emphasize that they long to establish a diplomatic and economic relationship with the United States. Their ultimate goal is to restore prosperity, peace, and development to their region — building modern roads, seaports, and electrical infrastructure in collaboration with American partnerships. They see President Trump as a beacon of freedom and peace, and they believe his background as a developer, peacemaker, and advocate for global stability uniquely positions him to advocate for their cause.

“We have watched President Trump stand up for oppressed

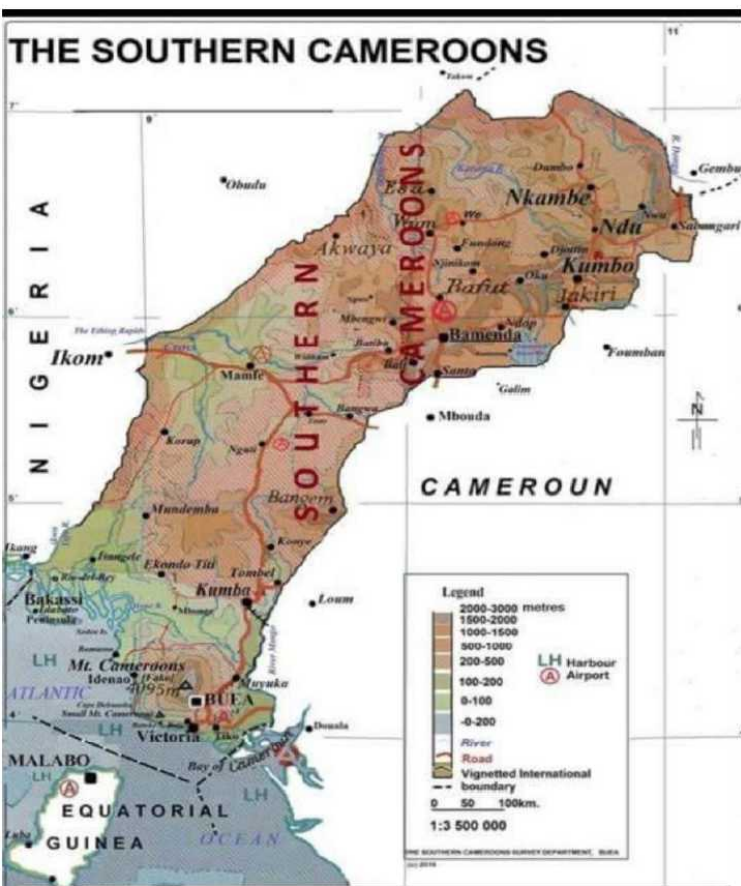
people across the globe and promote peace among nations,” the statement continued. “We now pray earnestly that he will see our struggle, recognize our independence, and help us end French Cameroon’s aggression toward our people,” Dr. Emmanuel Tita.

The Friends of Ambazonia wants the United States government to intervene in the ongoing conflict and support diplomatic negotiations that would ultimately grant Southern Cameroons full and recognized independence. They remain hopeful that the United States will leverage its position of influence to end the war crimes and atrocities happening in their land and assist in laying the foundation for a free, peaceful, and prosperous Ambazonia.

As Southern Cameroons continues to struggle for its survival and self-governance, the Friends of Ambazonia remain committed to advocating for their people’s freedom. They believe that, with the help of the United States and

the recognition of their sovereign independence, their nation can finally emerge from the ashes of conflict and begin a new chapter of peace, development, and prosperity.

Note from Editor: During The Woodruff Times trip to Washington, D.C., for the presidential inauguration, we met representatives from the Free Ambazonia movement—an organization advocating for the independence of Southern Cameroons. Their presence at the event, and their willingness to share their story, prompted us to take a deeper look into their cause, the history behind it, and what it means for the people they represent.



This map was provided in documentation received from Friends of Ambazonia