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HAPPY HOLIDAYS



The Skanner News wishes all our readers a very Happy Holiday season and respectfully reminds you to be careful on the roads and in the streets. Remember, never drink and drive, and if you see someone heading toward a car after drinking offer to call a cab.

PHOTO BY JERRY FOSTER

Parks Need Diversity

By MATT VOLZ of The Associated Press

WEST GLACIER, Mont. (AP) —National parks must do a better job of attracting more minority visitors and employees or else risk becoming irrelevant in the future, the retiring superintendent of Glacier National Park said.

More diversity among park visitors and National Park Service workers will better ensure the nation's most protected landscapes remain that way, Chas Cartwright said.

"If I look at who visits here, let's go with that one first, it is a lot of white people," he said. "We have an international visitation that is fairly substantial, but there are segments of our population that aren't spending much, if any, time in the park, and that really kind of begs the question: Are we relevant to all of America?"

Speaking to The Associated Press in a wide-ranging interview about two weeks before he steps down Dec. 28, Cartwright said the lack of diversity is one of the greatest challenges facing the National Park Service.

Parks must find and tell the stories of minorities, accommodate their needs and, for kids, emphasize the fun side of the parks instead of just the educational aspect, he said.

"If we don't have future stewards and owners ... that are involved in helping protect them, then are they going to stay the great places they are over time?" Cartwright said.

A survey conducted for the park service in 2000, the most recent available, by Northern Arizona University researchers found 36 percent of whites surveyed had visited a park service unit in the past two years, compared to 33 percent of American Indians, 29 percent of Asians, 27 percent of Hispanics and just 13 percent of blacks.

The report said blacks were more than three times as likely as whites to believe park employees gave visitors poor service and the parks were uncomfortable places for people like themselves.

Cartwright is ending 40 years of federal government service, the last four as superin-

Tim Scott to Replace Sen. DeMint

By SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) Gov. Nikki Haley appointed Rep. Tim Scott to the U.S. Senate on Monday, making him the South's first black Republican senator since Reconstruction in a state whose politics is steeped in the history of slavery and Civil War.

"It speaks to the evolution of South Carolina and our nation," Scott, 47, said of his appointment to fill the seat vacated by Sen. Jim DeMint, a conservative who reigned his post with

four years left in his second term to head a right-leaning think tank.

Haley, a daughter of Indian immigrants who became South Carolina's first female and minority governor in 2010, acknowledged making history with her appointment, but she stressed that she picked Scott for his conservative values.

"He earned this seat for what I know he's going to do in making South Carolina and our country proud," she said.

Scott, 47, will be sworn in Jan. 3. Senate Republicans welcomed the appointment, which

comes more than a month after Republicans' poor performance with minorities in the election forced soul-searching in the party to broaden its appeal.

He'll become only the fourth black Republican in Senate history and the only black Republican in Congress, after Rep. Allen West of Florida lost his re-election bid last month.

"This is truly an historic moment for the Palmetto State from a governor who's broken more than a few barriers in her own career," Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky said.

Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., one of two Hispanics in the Senate, called Scott "a passionate, thoughtful and sincere advocate for the people of South Carolina and for limited government principles."

Scott is certain to be front and center when Republicans talk about fiscal matters and other issues vital to the conservative base. It remains to be seen what committee assignments he will get. He had served on the House Rules Committee.

Scott's selection culminates a fast rise through South Carolina

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Obama: Gun Proposals Due By January

By Josh Levs and Holly Yan CNN

The nation will have a set of recommendations to address widespread gun violence within weeks, President Obama announced Wednesday.

Vice President Joe Obama will lead an inter-agency group to come up with "concrete proposals no later than January — proposals that I then intend to push without delay," the president said.

Speaking five days after a gunman killed

27 people, including 20 children, at a Connecticut elementary school, Obama said that "if there is even one thing that we can do" to prevent such tragedies, "we have a deep obligation, all of us, to try."

"This is not some Washington commission. This is not something where folks are going to be studying the issue for six months and publishing a report that gets read and then pushed aside. This is a team that has a very specific task to pull together real reforms right now."

No single law or set of laws can prevent gun violence, the president said.

But the complexity of the issue "can no longer be an excuse for doing nothing," he said.

The "complex" issue demands action on gun laws and work in making "access to mental health care at least as easy as access to a gun," he said.

The country also needs to tackle a "culture

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