

## **Health centers, tournament slashed from budget**

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COLUMBIA --Loris Hospital's \$1 million allocation for the Seacoast Medical Center expansion will be slashed from the Senate Finance Committee's version of the budget, along with \$250,000 for Little River Medical Center and \$50,000 for the Beach Ball Classic.

Word of the cuts came Wednesday as the committee continued work on its version of the budget passed by the House.

The details are to be released today.

Allocations such as those three were cut from the Senate budget because of an expected dire financial outlook report coming next week, said Sen. Yancey McGill, D-Kingstree. McGill is the Horry-Georgetown area's only representative on the Finance Committee.

"Any type project that is not normally a budgeted item" is being cut from the committee's proposal, McGill said.

The plan is to be debated in the full Senate in two weeks. Rep. Tracy Edge, R-North Myrtle Beach, got the allocations put in the House version of the budget.

"The House found a way to fund all the priorities," he said. "I hope they can remain in the budget."

McGill said the Bureau of Economic Advisors is expected to report next week that state revenue will be \$30 million less than expected just a few weeks ago when the House finished its version of the budget.

The predictions are expected to be so disturbing that the Finance Committee approved provisions Wednesday night allowing state employees to take unpaid furloughs, and granting agencies special flexibility in use of their funds.

Sen. Hugh Leatherman, R-Florence, chairman of the Finance Committee, warned that all agencies will be cut.

McGill said he restored some tourism promotion money that the House cut, but is not sure it will hold.

Brad Dean, president of the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, came to watch some of the debate because of the tourism promotion money. Myrtle Beach, Charleston

and Beaufort County were able to use the 3-1 matching funds with private money to boost advertising.

Money for Interstate 73 remains in the budget because it was already there and it is a state project, McGill said. Edge said \$500,000 for Shared Care, a Horry County medical program for the poor, is also safe because it is a regular budgeted item.

Money to help Georgetown with a downtown drainage project is not part of the budget and is still a possibility, McGill said. Those funds would come from the state and federal Departments of Transportation, he said.

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