

Title: **FOUR YEARS LATER**
 Author: TIM SMITH TCSMITH@GREENVILLENEWS.COM
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FOUR YEARS LATER

But security has improved dramatically, officials say

TIM SMITH

TCSMITH@GREENVILLENEWS.COM

COLUMBIA - Four years after South Carolina's tax agency suffered the worst data breach in state history, 5 million attempts are made each week to gain un-

authorized access to state government computers, which hold vast amounts of personal data belong-

Breach

Continued from Page 1A

emails to state Department of Revenue employees triggered a massive breach that exposed personal information for almost 4 million taxpayers and 700,000 businesses.

"It was a wake-up call for both government and private industry," DOR Director Rick Reames told *The Greenville News*. "Since the data breach, the department has come light years in terms of cyber security. What we have done is to work hard to instill a culture that security is non-negotiable."

Chaney Adams, a spokeswoman for Gov. Nikki Haley, said, "In the wake of the Revenue Department breach, Gov. Haley led an unprecedented, coordinated effort across state government with the help of law enforcement, agency directors, IT experts and members of the General Assembly to strengthen information security and put long-term measures in place that protect the people of South Carolina from criminal hackers going forward."

ing to taxpayers, employees and members of the public.

The attempts come from around the world, state officials say, and include roughly 350 attempts per

week to deliver advanced or never seen before malicious software on to agency computers.

But this is not the same cyber security environment that hackers found in 2012, when phishing

See BREACH, Page 4A

Cyber security experts at the time noted a host of lax security features at the tax agency that aided the hackers in their crime, including a lack of encryption, inadequate system detection safeguards and single-factor authentication for data access.

But what allowed the hackers inside the door, so to speak, was a phishing email. On Aug. 13, 2012, investigators believe, one employee clicked on an embedded link, triggering malware that captured the user's password and effectively gave the attackers a key to DOR's data vault.

The hackers spent weeks exploring DOR's computers by remote access before finally locating and carrying off their prize databases loaded with millions of taxpayer's files and personal information.

No one at the agency noticed the theft until members of the U.S. Secret Service notified department officials a month later of possible stolen personal information from tax data.

A cyber-security blog-

ger likened what happened to bank robbers who "blast their way into the vault room, and then drag the vault around the bank for two days before running away with the

plunder without anyone hearing or seeing them."

"In the physical world, it can only happen if all the security personal were deaf and blind," wrote Tal Be'ery for Security Week.

Four years later, the state has made myriad cyber security improvements, but the culprits of the DOR breach have not been captured.

"It is still a very active and open investigation," Thom Berry, a spokesman for the State Law Enforcement Division, told *The News*. "We recently discussed the matter with our federal partners and they assured us they too have a very open and active investigation on the matter."

A spokesman for the Secret Service could not be reached for comment. Officials have largely been mum about the probe's progress since the initial news conferences.

Reames, who was

hired nearly two years after the breach, said cyber security today at his agency bears no resemblance to the protections around before the breach.

All employees, for instance, now receive continuing training on cyber security.

"What all of the cyber-security experts tell you is that approximately 80 percent of the threats can be eliminated by vigilant training," he said.

Before any employee has access to a DOR computer system, Reames said, they have to go through nationally accredited security training, including testing on phishing, privacy issues and data classification. Existing employees have to be re-certified each year. There also are security drills, penetration testing and phishing email tests.

The agency also hired a chief information security officer who reports directly to the agency's director. An internal auditor also now reports to the director.

New technologies have been installed to prevent threats or to mitigate them, including monitor-



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ing and alert products, Reames said.

“We’re significantly stronger than we were in 2012,” he said. “But this is a constantly changing game. The criminals are always changing their tactics, and we have, too. It would be foolish to predict that there would not be another event. I will tell you that we are doing everything we can to prevent it.”

Haley announced the breach on Oct. 26, 2012, about 10 days after Secret Service officials tipped DOR. Investigators said they wanted the time to make progress on their investigation before the world knew what happened.

Though she initially described the attack as sophisticated and one that couldn’t be prevented, Haley eventually learned of inadequate security not only at DOR but at other agencies. DOR’s director at the time resigned.

She took a series of steps to better protect agency computers while at the same time protecting consumers whose personal data was stolen.

Officials entered into a

\$12 million credit monitoring contract to help taxpayers affected by the breach.

Haley ordered her cabinet agencies to use the state’s monitoring service, which was being upgraded to provide around-the-clock protection, and asked the state’s inspector general, Patrick Maley, to look at state government cyber security as state lawmakers held hearings and explored what went wrong and improvements that needed to be made.

Officials have since strengthened data security at agencies through a series of improvements.

Those have included the establishment of an office of state cyber security, which has provided advanced cyber-security training for state employees, developed new information-security and data-privacy policies and overseen a series of technology improvements.

The improvements have included implementing stronger network monitoring capabilities for all Cabinet agencies such as 24-hour a day monitoring, intervention, and interruption of unusu-

al events and viruses. They also have included installation of new firewall technology to protect agency computers from threats outside and within the network.

The technology also detects the approximately 100,000 attempts each week to infect agency computers with malicious software, according to the state’s administrative agency, in which the information security office resides.

Officials with the state Department of Administration say there are about 5 million attempts each week at unauthorized access onto state computers, though not all of those are considered high-risk,

One of the issues with state agency cyber security has been that because state government is decentralized, many agencies have operated their computer systems as “islands,” with their own procedures, technology and policies. Haley’s executive orders covered only her Cabinet agencies.

In January, Haley issued an executive order for her Cabinet agencies to use shared services to

address information security risks. Lawmakers, feeling the issue was too important to be contained to those agencies, applied her order to all of state government.

To date, Reames said, there have been no other breaches and no verified cases in which someone’s personal identity has been stolen as the result of the 2012 hacking.

Some Democratic lawmakers suggested in past years that is because officials may have paid a ransom to the hackers. Authorities have never publicly commented on those rumors.

Reames offered other explanations why no identity thefts have been traced to the data breach.

“Law enforcement has said they have not identified a single case related to the data breach,” he said. “That may be because the state did a great job of mitigating the results. But unfortunately there have been so many data breaches since the DOR data breach that the public is to some extent numb to this because they have had their information exposed many times by many different organizations.”

In 2012, phishing emails triggered a massive breach of personal information for taxpayers and businesses.

Lax security features aided the hackers in their crime, including a lack of encryption and inadequate safeguards.

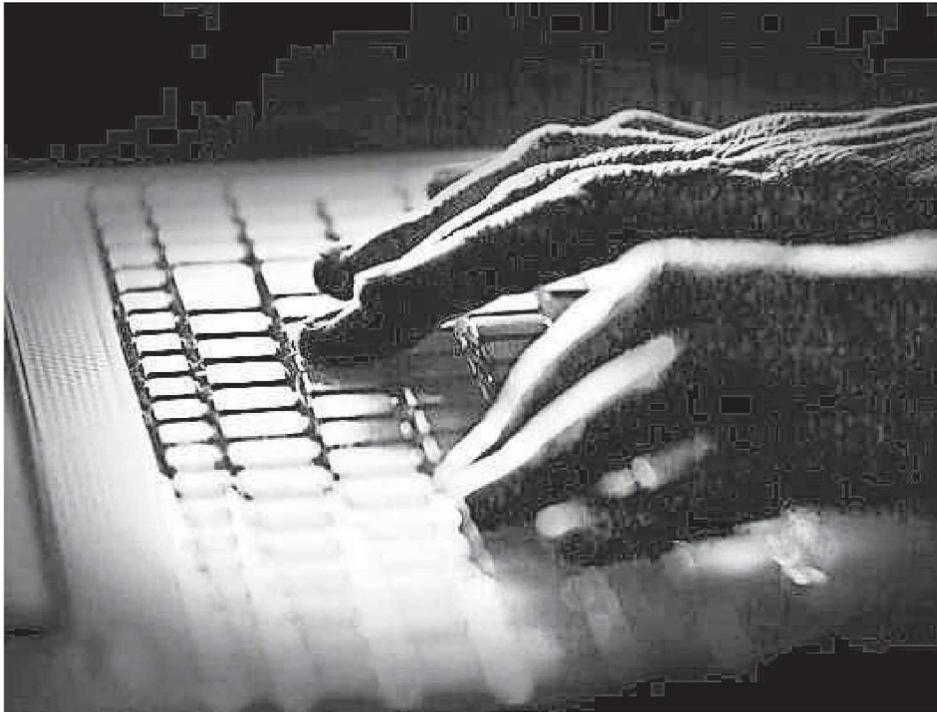
Hackers spent weeks exploring computers by remote access before locating taxpayers’ **personal information**.

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**SOUTH CAROLINA STILL INVESTIGATING
DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE DATA BREACH**



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FILE

Some cyber security experts believe much of the tax fraud hitting states, including South Carolina, is the result of the theft of personal information through hacking.

Title: **Short-term rentals present challenges**
 Author: ERIC CONNOR ECONNOR@GREENVILLENEWS.COM
 Size: 87.26 column inches
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Short-term rentals present challenges

‘Home-sharing’ concept arrives in Greenville

ERIC CONNOR

ECONNOR@GREENVILLENEWS.COM

You have some extra room. You have a person looking for a place to stay for a day or two. You both agree to a price online. The host makes some money, and the guest saves on the cost of a traditional hotel.

This is, more or less, the concept behind today’s “home-sharing” economy, a method of business that — like Uber’s impact on taxi cabs — has disrupted the business models of hotels, motels, bed and breakfast inns and rentals across the country.

Businesses like Airbnb, VRBO and HomeAway have presented new challenges in Greenville, where demand for downtown lodging in particular has led to a proliferation of homeowners turning their houses into short-term rentals.

‘Home-sharing’

Continued from Page 1A

It’s an issue that elected leaders say they should weigh in on, to provide some guidance to city departments that are in the early stages of trying to understand the business activity and its impact.

“I think we need to do some work and look at practices of small cities and give some direction,” City Councilwoman Amy Ryberg Doyle said.

Range of listings

The listings on Airbnb range from sharing an extra room to renting out an entire house. A two-bedroom downtown condo advertising as steps

The wave that first swept over cities like San Francisco and New York has hit Greenville — and so swiftly that a city struggling with affordable downtown lodging options finds itself with more questions than answers.

How should these short-term rentals be regulated? What responsibility do hosts owe to their neighborhoods? What burden of local taxes should they bear that they aren’t now? And, to what degree does the city want to enforce the laws or create new ones?

The home-sharing concept is popular: In and around downtown, 124 active rentals were listed on Airbnb’s website on Friday with another hundred or so more rentals in the outer reaches of Greenville County.

So far, the city says it has collected

away from the Peace Center goes for nearly \$300 a night. A private extra room in the North Main community advertises for \$50.

Hosts list specific accommodations and rules and are subject to ratings by guests for quality control.

The hosts’ full names aren’t required for a listing and exact addresses aren’t available until deep into the online reservation process, making it difficult to pinpoint where a home-sharing business is operated, City Manager John Castile said. If no complaints are made, the city is left to investigate each listing individually, which he said the city’s zoning enforcement officer does regularly. When a property is identified in a permissible area, the city’s revenue of-

no tax money from such businesses.

And for now, enforcement is being carried out when complaints are made, which are few.

“Right now, we’re dealing with it, for the most part, on a complaint basis,” said Bryan Wood, the city’s zoning administrator, who had sought a clarification from the city’s Board of Zoning Appeals on his interpretation of how city laws should apply.

The request was pulled this week, Wood said, because no one has appealed the handful of decisions that have been made, and lawyers advised that an appeal is necessary for a clarification.

See ‘HOME-SHARING’, Page 6A

office is notified to follow up on business license and tax issues.

“With the growth in the ‘sharing economy’ and as Greenville has become a destination city, an increase in short-term rentals is bound to occur,” Castile said. “The city will continue to evaluate the matter and will devote time and resources as the circumstances warrant.”

The city has rules that apply to short-term rentals and classifies them differently depending on what zoning districts they are in, the duration of rental and whether a property is owner-occupied.

If a host rents an entire home, the property is considered a hotel or motel, which requires an occupancy permit and is only allowed in commercial and



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office districts.

If a host rents a room in an owner-occupied dwelling, the home is classified as a bed and breakfast inn and can operate in a residential area with a special exception granted by the Board of Zoning Appeals.

The special exception process requires notifying surrounding residents, who are allowed input on the decision.

The city has only handled about a dozen cases so far.

The most notable, Wood said, was a home on Woodvale Avenue in the Augusta Road community that was being rented to fraternities and sororities for parties. The city ultimately took the homeowner to municipal court, and the owner sold the house, Wood said.

The issue of home-sharing in residential areas will be taken to neighborhood associations to consider as part of the city's review, Doyle said. The review also will include the input of home-sharing hosts and area hotels that have expressed concern that hosts aren't paying required local taxes, she said.

The tax issue

The concerns over tax payments by Airbnb has already played out in South Carolina, specifically along the coast where short-term rentals are more prevalent. In 2014, state legislators passed a law that allowed more enforcement power to local governments to require short-term renters to pay taxes.

This past June, Airbnb announced it would collect sales and accommodations taxes on behalf of hosts.

However, the company said in a statement that it would only collect taxes that are "administered or collected by the state at this time." That includes the 5 percent sales tax and the 2 percent state accommodations

tax, which is collected and then distributed to local governments.

What it doesn't include are local accommodations taxes that are collected by cities and counties on top of the state accommodations tax and used specifically for tourism-related purposes.

The city's local accommodations tax is 3 percent and last year brought in about \$3.6 million. The city has no estimate on how much local accommodations revenue it isn't receiving from home-sharing businesses, Nelson said.

Those taxes are collected from traditional lodging businesses, but the city hasn't collected any of that money from home-sharing businesses, said Kai Nelson, the city's budget director. In fact, he said, only four home-sharing businesses have applied for a business license, and the city's business license classifications don't specify what website is used to facilitate home sharing.

"We don't know how they're listing their particular business nor do we know whether they've actually engaged in any business," Nelson said.

The business license would require home sharers to not only pay taxes but also meet building code inspections, he said. Greenville County also collects a 3-percent local accommodations tax and has no laws governing home-sharing businesses.

The county hasn't addressed the issue, spokesman Bob Mihalic said.

"This has not been an issue in the county," he said. "We have not had any complaints nor taken any actions."

However, the county along with the city and other local governments across the state are missing out on money they are entitled to. The Municipal Association of South Carolina has advocated for more oversight on how home-sharing businesses pay taxes, but the lo-

cal portion of the tax has been vexing, said Melissa Carter, the association's research and legislative liaison.

"We haven't quite navigated how the local piece is going to work," Carter said. "It's a little bit of a gray area."

The disruptions caused by sites like Airbnb draws similarities to that of Uber, which at one point was ordered not to operate in South Carolina, a decision that prompted Gov. Nikki Haley's intervention on behalf of Uber. The company was the target of fierce lobbying by the taxi cab industry, which claimed that Uber was operating with far less scrutiny and regulation.

The similarities to Uber only go so far, Carter said, because the state already had an oversight body in place to govern the taxi industry. The balance, she said, is a delicate one.

"You don't want to take away opportunities from homeowners at the same time," Carter said. "You want to protect the homeowners. We just need to be very thoughtful on how to move forward."

The hotel industry is watching and expects home-sharing businesses to pay their share, said R.P. Rama, vice president and chief technology and information officer for Greenville-based JHM Hotels and an executive board member of the South Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association.

The hotel industry sees direct competition where limited supply has created high demand for rooms, which is the case downtown as developers are building enough hotels to double the number of rooms over the couple years.

Services like Airbnb don't play by the same rules, because they don't pay the local accommodations tax and aren't subject to inspections, fire codes and compliance with laws requiring accessibility for the disabled, he said.



Title: **Haley appoints Aiken chiropractor to board**
 Author:
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 Aiken, SC Circulation: 19635



Haley appoints Aiken chiropractor to board

Governor Nikki Haley recently appointed Aiken chiropractor Dr. Antony Kyles, to the South Carolina Board of Chiropractic Examiners. Dr. Kyles was born in Auckland, New Zealand and graduated from Sherman College of Chiropractic in 1991. He has resided in Aiken and maintained a private practice for 23 years. Dr. Kyles will represent the 2nd Congressional District on the Board of Examiners.

Title: Commissioners named to ATC governing board
Author:
Size: 17.98 column inches
Aiken, SC Circulation: 19635



NAMES & NOTES

Commissioners named to ATC governing board

S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley has appointed two new Commissioners to the Aiken County Commission for Technical and Comprehensive Education, the governing board for Aiken Technical College.

The newest commissioners, Virginia (Ginger) Hawkins and Keyatta Priester, were formally introduced Monday during the Commission's regular meeting.

Hawkins is the chief nurse officer at Aiken Regional Medical Centers, where she has helped influence the strategic direction and aligns nursing goals to improve quality, patient safety and transform culture.

Priester is the community development manager for Aiken Electric Cooperative Inc., where she has worked to cultivate and develop lasting relationships in the community.

In addition to the Commission, Hawkins also serves on the Community Medi-

cal Clinic of Aiken County board, American Red Cross-Aiken Area board, and the CSRA Nursing Workforce Coalition. Hawkins is a member of the American Nurses Association, South Carolina Nurses Association, American Organization of Nurse Executives, American Association of Critical-Care Nurses, Sigma Theta Tau Nursing Honor Society, and is a 2015 graduate of Leadership Aiken County.

Priester serves on the United Way of Aiken County board, the Aiken Family Y board, the Aiken County Public School District Early Learning advisory board, and Tim Scott's John Moniz Champion of Hope advisory council. Priester is also involved in the Rotary Club of Aiken, Aiken Community Service Networking Group and is a member of the Midland Valley, Aiken and North Augusta chambers of commerce.



Hawkins



Priester

Title: **Top SC Dem asks Haley, McMaster to withdraw support for Trump**
 Author: The Associated Press
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 Florence, SC Circulation: 35092



Top SC Dem asks Haley, McMaster to withdraw support for Trump

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — South Carolina's top state House Democrat doubled down Wednesday on his call for top elected Republicans to withdraw their support of Donald Trump.

Alternatively, state Rep. Todd Rutherford said, Gov. Nikki Haley and Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster must tell the state's voters if they still plan to vote for the GOP nominee, given several days of events that have some within Trump's own party questioning his candidacy. In its own release, the South Carolina Democratic Party took on McMaster separately, saying the Republican who is often mentioned as a 2018 gubernatorial candidate "is in for a rude awakening" if he thinks Trump is his ticket to the governor's mansion.

Republicans nationwide have faced scrutiny this week due to the feud between Trump and the parents of a Capt. Humayun Khan, a decorated Muslim Army captain killed in Iraq. At least one House Republican has pulled support, saying he'd rather back Hillary Clinton than the GOP pick. U.S. Rep. Mark Sanford, who has said he'd support the

GOP's nominee, told The Associated Press he was "growing increasingly uneasy" with that decision and was "nearing the line" past which he could no longer back Trump.

Trump declined to endorse House Speaker Paul Ryan's re-election bid, saying he's "just not there yet" - echoing Ryan's demurral before endorsing Trump himself. On Fox Business News, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, a Trump backer, said the nominee had been "remarkably underperforming" in recent weeks.

"What is most troubling for the people of South Carolina ... is the fact that their governor and lieutenant governor continue to stand by his side no matter what," Rutherford, D-Columbia, said in a news release. "It is not enough to simply voice your disagreement with Mr. Trump's disgusting comments on a daily basis. The time has come for the leaders of our state to put country ahead of party and publicly reject his candidacy altogether."

Haley - who initially backed Marco Rubio before siding with Ted Cruz

over Trump - attended last month's Republican National Convention and has reluctantly said she'd back the party's nominee. In a statement Monday, she expressed support for Khan's family and made no mention of Trump.

McMaster, the first elected official to endorse Trump, gave a speech officially nominating the candidate at the convention. On Wednesday, he tweeted "Nothing's changed," with a link to his nomination speech.

President Barack Obama on Tuesday castigated Trump as "unfit" and "woefully unprepared" to serve in the White House, challenging Republicans to withdraw their support for their party's nominee, declaring "There has to come a point at which you say 'enough.'"

"Donald Trump's most recent meltdown is even more bizarre and troubling than usual," said Rutherford, seconding Obama's evaluation. "The Republican nominee for president is becoming more dangerous and unhinged by the minute and there seems to be no end in sight."

Title: **Committee to address growing pension crisis**
 Author: BY HAL MILLARD halmillard@gmail.com
 Size: 35.80 column inches
 Lexington, SC Circulation: 5652



Committee to address growing pension crisis

BY HAL MILLARD

halmillard@gmail.com

State lawmakers are set to tackle the state's struggling public-employee pension system.

A new joint, bipartisan House and Senate committee has been formed to address a pension system staggering under nearly \$17 billion in unfunded liabilities.

The committee, leaders said, has been tasked with finding ways to shore up the system and meet its obligations into the future, after years of alleged mismanagement, high broker fees, and poor returns on risky investments.

S.C. House Speaker Jay Lucas, R-Darlington, and Senate President Pro Tempore Hugh Leatherman, R-Florence, said the committee of six senators and six representatives would begin meeting next month.

In a statement, Lucas said thousands of South Carolinians contribute to the retirement system "with the hope of receiving a positive return in the future" and in turn

have entrusted the state to invest their money "wisely."

"We owe it to them to honor our commitments," Lucas said.

"I'm confident we'll roll up our sleeves, work together and make sure South Carolina honors its obligations in a fiscally responsible way," Leatherman said.

Gov. Nikki Haley has warned that fixing the ailing pension fund could likely "hurt." Already, public em-

ployees and their employers are being asked to pay more beginning this year. Last month, the S.C. Fiscal Accountability Authority approved a 0.5% increase in the amount that the state's more than 200,000 employees pay into the retirement system.

The state and the cities, counties and other public institutions those employees work for also will be required to pay 0.5% more.

Despite the increase, the extra money falls fall short

of what the pension system needs, with some officials suggesting employees pay as much as 12% of their salaries into the fund, a steep increase over the nearly 9% employees began kicking in beginning July 1.

Members of the Joint Committee on Pension Reform are: Reps. Mike Anthony, D-Union; Jeff Bradley, R-Beaufort; Gilda Cobb-Hunter, D-Orangeburg; Bill Herbkersman, R-Beaufort; Tommy Stringer, R-Greenville; Bill Whitmire, R-Oconee; and Sens. Sean Bennett, R-Dorchester; Kevin Bryant, R-Anderson; Mike Gambrell, R-Anderson; Darrell Jackson, D-Richland; Sen. Floyd Nicholson, D-Greenwood; and Vincent Sheheen, D-Kershaw.

'We owe it to them to honor our commitments.'

Jay Lucas
 S.C. House Speaker

Title: **Top House Democrat asks Haley, McMaster to withdraw their support for Trump**

Author:

Size: 18.44 column inches

Sumter, SC Circulation: 19018



Top House Democrat asks Haley, McMaster to withdraw their support for Trump

COLUMBIA (AP) — South Carolina's top state House Democrat doubled down Wednesday on his call for top elected Republicans to withdraw their support of Donald Trump.

Alternatively, state Rep. Todd Rutherford said, Gov. Nikki Haley and Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster must tell the state's voters if they still plan to vote for the GOP nominee, given several days of events that have some within Trump's own party questioning his candidacy.

Republicans nationwide have faced scrutiny this week because of the feud between Trump and

the parents of Capt. Humayun Khan, a decorated Muslim Army captain killed in Iraq. At least one House Republican has pulled support, saying he'd rather back Hillary Clinton than the GOP pick. U.S. Rep. Mark Sanford, who has said he'd support the GOP's nominee, told The Associated Press he was "growing increasingly uneasy" with that decision and was "nearing the line" past which he could no longer back Trump.

Trump declined to endorse House Speaker Paul Ryan's re-election bid, saying he's "just not there yet" — echoing Ryan's demurrals before endorsing Trump.



Title: Purple Heart Day And Viola Week
Author:
Size: 60.91 column inches
Dillon, SC Circulation: 5278



A Proclamation

Purple Heart Day And Viola Week

These are the faces of just a few of the many Purple Heart recipients in Dillon County. Learn more about these brave men inside this issue.

State of South Carolina Governor's Proclamation

WHEREAS, created by General George Washington in 1782, the Order of the Purple Heart for Military Merit is the oldest military decoration in the United States in present use; and

WHEREAS, the Order of the Purple Heart for Military Merit recognizes the outstanding valor and fidelity of members of the United States Armed Forces who have been wounded by an enemy while fighting bravely to preserve and protect our nation's most cherished freedoms; and

WHEREAS, as a congression-

ally-chartered national service veterans organization, the Military Order of the Purple Heart is committed to funding veterans services, welfare, rehabilitation, and educational programs while upholding the proud legacy of courage and honor exhibited by combat-wounded veterans; and

WHEREAS, in special recognition of the lasting debt of gratitude we owe the brave men and women who have risked their lives to protect our way of life, the Military Order of the Purple Heart annually distributes simulated versions of its official flower, the Purple Heart Viola,

that are assembled by veterans with disabilities and financial needs in an effort to raise funds for veterans services.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Nikki R. Haley, Governor of the great State of South Carolina, do hereby proclaim August 7-14, 2016, as VIOLA WEEK and August 7, 2016, as PURPLE HEART RECOGNITION DAY throughout the state and encourage all South Carolinians to recognize and pay tribute to combat-wounded veterans across the Palmetto State and the nation for their selfless contributions in defense of freedom and democracy. Nikki R. Haley, Governor, State of South Carolina.

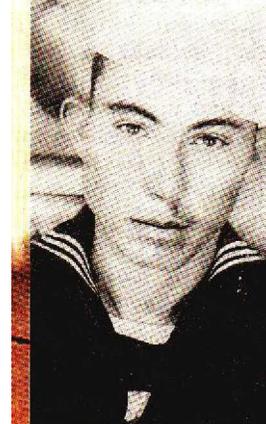
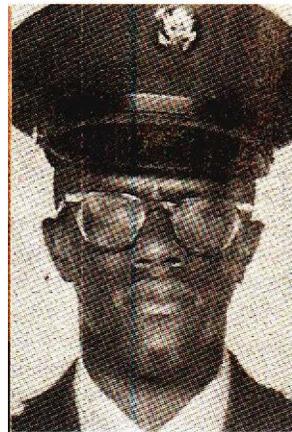


Title: **Purple Heart Day And Viola Week**

Author:

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Dillon, SC Circulation: 5278



Title: **South Carolina's leaders shortchange the future**
 Author:
 Size: 34.72 column inches
 Pawleys Island, SC Circulation: 5136



School funding

South Carolina's leaders shortchange the future

To the editor:

Re: Op-ed by Phil Noble on South Carolina and school funding (July 21).

Interesting that Mr. Noble's excellent reporting about the failure of the South Carolina legislature to fund the educational system in the state coincides with an article in the Georgetown Times about the new city administrator, former Police Chief Paul Gardner, who wants to "foster a spirit of economic recovery" in Georgetown. Georgetown was named the poorest city in South Carolina by Wall Street researchers based, in part, on the average household income of \$26,330 (that's a family of four).

Mr. Noble writes about a 17-year-old named William, who dropped out of Lee Central High School in 1993. Since he left school, his and his family's life has been bleak for lack of an education. A lawsuit was

filed on behalf of the Lee County School District and 38 other districts charging that the state did not provide "minimally adequate" education to children in the state's poorest school districts.

The case went to court. And for 21 years, the state resisted and our children did not learn. Finally, in 2014 the South Carolina Supreme Court ruled that the state must fix our failing school system. As Mr. Noble states in his article, it is now 2016 and the state legislature has done nothing.

So let's travel back in time to 1993 and change William's future.

He's again 17 years old, has been more than adequately educated through a forward-thinking school system in the Lee County School District. His grades are good. He goes to college and graduates with a

BA. He likes living in South Carolina, so he gets a job with a decent salary and heads up the ladder of success. He marries and has children and buys a home where he continually contributes to the community by paying taxes, voting, buying goods and services locally.

My best-case-scenario has flaws, I know. However, here's my message to the backward-thinking South Carolina legislature and Nikki Haley: How can you possibly live with the knowledge that your state has some of the poorest cities in the United States?

Knowledge is power. When you have an educated constituency, you have people who have the capacity to find and keep good jobs; you have people who know how to be healthy and tend to pay their good fortune forward; you have the opportunity in the political arena to bring in out-

side businesses who look at your state and see an educated population that believes that all lives matter – that all our children deserve to be educated and those in office get that

and support any funding that involves helping your state's population.

Your funding cuts to the poorest school districts are reprehensible. You have categorically denied South Carolina's school children – the future of our state – a decent education. Personally, the first chance I get, I'll vote you out of office.

As for the Nelson Millins Riley and Scareborough, the law firm who pursued this lawsuit all these years: Thank you for your tenacity. Thank you for doing the right thing. Too bad the South Carolina legislature doesn't have your office's ethics.

Patricia Barrett
 Pawleys Island