

From: Godfrey, Rob
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IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Aiken Standard

Aiken Standard: Haley in Aiken: Regions should work together to move forward

Rob Novit

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<http://www.aikenstandard.com/article/20130305/AIK0101/130309854/haley-in-aiken-regions-should-work-together-to-move-forward>

“Companies are beginning to realize that small South Carolina towns in rural areas can be good places to relocate or start a new business, S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley said at the opening address of the S.C. Rural Summit in Aiken on Monday. ...

“‘Companies may actually prefer rural areas that are community-driven,’ Haley said.

“With the help of the Commerce Department, jobs have recently emerged in 45 of the 46 counties, she said. Personnel with the agency are getting additional bonuses for their roles in bringing industry to rural counties like Jasper, Barnwell and Clarendon counties.

“The concept in the beginning is to drive through small communities as a CEO would do. ...

“Commerce has been looking at the beautification of rural areas, she said. If a town has old or abandoned buildings, the state can come in to some of those locations and demolish some of them. Others can be refurbished to be more attractive to prospective businesses.

“‘We’re partners,’ Haley said of the communities, ‘but you have to help us.’ ...

“The Commerce Department has focused on issues such as health care, education improvements and churches, she said. The graduation rate is crucial, and so are opportunities such as welding and other hands-on skills. ...

“‘Everybody is starting to step up,’ Haley said. ‘You deserve as much as anybody else. I’m a rural girl, and I’m passionate about this. I know about family businesses, and you’ve got challenges, but you can overcome them. ...

“Will Williams, executive director of the Aiken-Edgefield Economic Development Partnership, was pleased that Haley participated in the summit. ...

“‘We continue to try to identify infrastructure needs in those communities,’ said Williams.

“‘Sometimes there are limits to water and sewer that industry needs, but we just have to keep moving forward.’” ...

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Rob Godfrey
Office of Gov. Nikki Haley

