

Title: **Local rally against ISIS promotes understanding**  
 Author: ROMANDO DIXSON  
 Size: 30.07 square inch  
 Greenville, SC Circulation: 113473



# Local rally against ISIS promotes understanding

Taylors-based Islamic Society leads effort

ROMANDO DIXSON

Ali Alkelani stood on the curb of Main Street near East Coffee Street, helping hold up a sign that said, "Muslims Against Isis."

He said he and other Muslims have found that people are tying them to ISIS in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in Paris.

"This is something we're really against," Alkelani said. "We believe ISIS is a terrorist organization. And the Muslims, they have nothing to do with ISIS. So we as Muslims, we condemn the ideology and acts of ISIS. So we're here to say we have nothing to do with ISIS."

The Islamic Society of Greenville, which is based in Taylors, organized the rally in downtown Greenville. Alkelani, one of its members, made and distributed signs.

Ted Morrison, of Greenville, learned about the event at the beginning of church Sunday at St. Giles Presbyterian and decided to support it. He held a sign that read "Stop ISIS not refugees."

"Let's be realistic: We're all immigrants," Morrison said. "And I think that we do disservice to hospitality and community if we reject people who are different than us. And in this case, they would be people who are refugees from hostility. Gosh, these people are really yearning to breathe free. And we're America. We're supposed to support those who are seeking freedom."

No one openly disagreed with Morrison's sign downtown Sunday. However, refugees have been a hot topic statewide and nationally.

More than two dozen governors last week signaled that they would prevent Syrian refugees from settling in their states, USA TODAY reported. They are concerned refugees seeking to relocate to the United

States might have terrorist ties after reports surfaced that one of the attackers in the Paris attacks may have entered France as a Syrian refugee.

Gov. Nikki Haley, in a letter to Secretary of State John Kerry, questioned the ability of federal agents to thoroughly vet Syrian refugees and asked that no Syrians be sent to South Carolina.

Anchia Kinard, of Simpsonville, happened to be walking through downtown and noticed the rally. She said she agreed with it and was encouraged to see so many cultures represented.

"I wouldn't expect to see this in Greenville," she said.

Akan Malici, an associate professor at Furman, addressed the crowd, calling ISIS an enemy of humanity. His eyes watered as he spoke about how Muslims have been killed by ISIS and are fleeing for safety.

"It means so much to us that you are all here," he said.

Title: **S.C.'s share of \$1.2B in flood damage is \$114M**  
 Author: BY JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press  
 Size: 26.35 square inch  
 Aiken, SC Circulation: 19635



# S.C.'s share of \$1.2B in flood damage is \$114M

BY JEFFREY COLLINS  
*Associated Press*

COLUMBIA — South Carolina taxpayers will need to pay at least \$114 million for the state's share of damage caused by October's massive flooding, which has a price tag topping \$1 billion, the governor said Tuesday.

Gov. Nikki Haley said the state won't need to borrow any money, and she will ask lawmakers to use part of a predicted increase of more than \$1 billion in revenue to pay the bills.

The estimates released at a news conference Tuesday include the state's obligations for damaged roads, houses and other infrastructure like the Columbia Canal, which was damaged and left the state's largest city without clean water for more than a week.

The governor also said

## What do you think?

Comment on this story at [www.aikenstandard.com](http://www.aikenstandard.com), write to Opinions, *Aiken Standard*, Box 456, Aiken, S.C. 29802 or send an email to [editorial@aiken-standard.com](mailto:editorial@aiken-standard.com).

there have been \$181 million in insurance claims to private companies, and the federal government plans on paying about \$500 million to help with roads, individual damage claims and assistance to government agencies. Add in the estimated \$375 million in direct damage to agriculture, and the total bill for flood damage is around \$1.2 billion.

The floods happened after up to 2 feet of rain fell over a few days in early October. The worst flooding extended from Columbia east and

south to the coast. Nineteen people died in South Carolina and more than 540 roads and bridges were closed. Less than 70 bridges and roads are currently closed, and officials said 26 of them can't be fixed now because they run over damaged dams with undecided futures.

Haley said the delay in reporting damage numbers was necessary.

"It's the accountant in me. You never guess numbers. It's the worst thing you can ever do. When you guess numbers, you make mistakes," Haley said.

The governor has two requests of the federal government. She is asking the state's congressional delegation to obtain \$140 million to help repair private homes. The flood, made worse by dams breaking in the Columbia area, affected many people without flood insurance.

Title: **Officials: Economy looking good for next year**  
 Author: BY DERREK ASBERRY [dasberry@aikenstandard.com](mailto:dasberry@aikenstandard.com)  
 Size: 44.02 square inch  
 Aiken, SC Circulation: 19635



# Officials: Economy looking good for next year

BY DERREK ASBERRY

[dasberry@aikenstandard.com](mailto:dasberry@aikenstandard.com)

COLUMBIA — Aiken should continue growing along with the rest of the state despite October's historic flooding and a statement Tuesday from Gov. Nikki Haley asking legislators to use at least \$114 million to help pay for flood damages.

University of South Carolina researchers gave a media briefing Tuesday in Columbia where attendees gathered 2016 projections for the state

economy.

The annual event included a flooding caveat this year since the state is still in recovery mode.

Economist Stephen Slice said there is an obvious micro-impact for Aiken County farmers and other local stakeholders impacted by the flooding; however, Aiken was lucky compared to the rest of the state because the majority of its farming deals with live-

stock and crops that weren't in season, he said.

"That area going toward Aiken and Edgefield has a lot of poultry, which hasn't been hurt that bad," Slice said. "So recovery, overall, shouldn't impact the economy too much there."

Haley reported Tuesday that

Please see **OUTLOOK**, Page 12A

## OUTLOOK

CONTINUED from 1A

October's flooding damage caused more than \$438 million in damages, including \$132 million in damages to roads and bridges.

Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, assistance will account for about \$300 million of the needed money, Haley said.

Doug Woodward, the USC director of research, said that on a broader scale, Aiken is expected to have a positive year in 2016.

Job creation and local efforts will have more of an impact on state economies

rather than flood damage, Woodward said.

He added that ongoing work at the Savannah River Site, combined with new businesses in the area, should help Aiken grow.

"Aiken is also a healthy location being close to the Upstate," Woodward said. "I think you'll start to see some of that spill over into the bordering regions, including the Aiken area."

The Palmetto State can expect broad-based growth across most industries, which will positively impact gains in employment and

income, said Woodward and Joey Von Nessen, another research economist.

Preliminary numbers for 2016 show that job creation is expected to grow by 2.9 percent, along with growth in consumer spending.

The economy experts said it has taken a while, but most of the state is better off than it was several years ago when it entered into a recession with the rest of the country.

Even with the flooding impacts, efforts to restore the state will result in more jobs. That job demand, along with the acquisition of Volvo and

other economic drivers, puts South Carolina in a good position moving forward, Von Nessen said.

"This year represents the first time in the current expansion that we've seen the creation of high-wage jobs accompanied by significant wage growth across multiple industries," Von Nessen said. "This means more South Carolinians are feeling the effects of the expansion."

**Derrek Asberry** is the SRS beat reporter for the *Aiken Standard* and has been with the paper since June 2013.

Title: **Officials: Economy looking good for next year**  
Author: BY DERREK ASBERRY dasberry@aikenstandard.com  
Size: 44.02 square inch  
Aiken, SC Circulation: 19635



STAFF PHOTO BY DERREK ASBERRY

**USC economic officials Stephen Slice, left, Douglas Woodward and Joey Von Nessen spoke to reporters Tuesday about the economic future for South Carolina in 2016.**

Title: **S.C. shoppers latest to pay taxes on Amazon sales**  
 Author: BY SEANNA ADCOX The Associated Press  
 Size: 76.88 square inch  
 Myrtle Beach, SC Circulation: 61238



# S.C. shoppers latest to pay taxes on Amazon sales

BY SEANNA ADCOX  
 The Associated Press

**South Carolina gave Amazon a 4 1/2-year exemption from collecting sales taxes from its residents in exchange for creating at least 2,000 full-time jobs with health benefits and investing \$125 million**

**Tax break from 2011 expires Jan. 1**

**Taxing Amazon's in-state sales could add tens of millions of dollars to South Carolina's coffers in 2016**

## COLUMBIA

A sales-tax break the Legislature gave Amazon in 2011 expires Jan. 1, making South Carolina the last state to collect among those where officials cut similar deals with the online retail giant.

Taxing Amazon's in-state sales could add tens of millions of dollars to South Carolina's coffers in 2016, said Max Behlke, the National Conference of State Legislatures' manager of state and federal relations.

State Revenue Director Rick Reames declined to give estimates beyond saying, "We expect a significant increase in sales tax revenues."

For years, the Seattle-based company fought collecting sales taxes from its customers. The U.S. Supreme Court has twice ruled – in 1967 and 1992 – that a state can't require a company to collect and remit the tax unless it has a "physical presence" in the state.

As Amazon expanded, rather than collect taxes in states that tried to force it, the company severed ties with affiliates and scrapped plans for distribution centers. South Carolina was among 10 states that gave Amazon a temporary tax reprieve in exchange for jobs and investment, Behlke said.

In all, South Carolina loses out on an estimated \$254 million in taxes from out-of-state sales – mostly online but also through catalogues and phone purchases, according to a 2014 report by the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Behlke cautioned the number's not precise. "No one knows the full amount states are losing," he said.

But on New Year's Day, South Carolina joins 26 states where Amazon, the heavyweight of online retailing, collects the tax, accord-

ing to the company's website. Five states don't have sales taxes.

Spokespeople for Amazon did not return multiple phone and email messages.

South Carolina gave Amazon a 4 1/2-year exemption from collecting sales taxes from its residents in exchange for creating at least 2,000 full-time jobs with health benefits and investing \$125 million by Dec. 31, 2013. But the deal that brought a distribution center to Lexington County – and later, a second center in Spartanburg – almost didn't happen.

The law passed in June 2011 without the signature of Gov. Nikki Haley, whose vocal opposition nearly sank one of her predecessor's last big economic deals. Gov. Mark Sanford's administration advocated extending to Amazon the five-year sales tax collection exemption that QVC received in 2006 to come to Florence. But as details on the ex-

emption emerged, opposition mounted. Haley left the decision to legislators while opposing it at meetings across the state, calling it bad policy that gives Amazon an unfair price advantage over retailers that must collect the tax. Opponents included tea party activists,

the state's small business chamber, and national retail chains that backed an anti-Amazon advertising campaign.

Amid the opposition, the House rejected the initial deal – which promised 1,249 jobs and a \$90 million investment. Amazon then announced it was abandoning its plans. Local legislators and elected officials launched their own public-relations campaign and Amazon upped its offer, leading to approval of the enhanced package.

How many workers Amazon currently employs in South Carolina is unclear. The company self-reported to a state Commerce survey



Title: **S.C. shoppers latest to pay taxes on Amazon sales**  
 Author: BY SEANNA ADCOX The Associated Press  
 Size: 76.88 square inch  
 Myrtle Beach, SC Circulation: 61238

that it employs up to 1,500 people at the two distribution centers.

While Amazon doesn't yet collect taxes in South Carolina, by law shoppers are

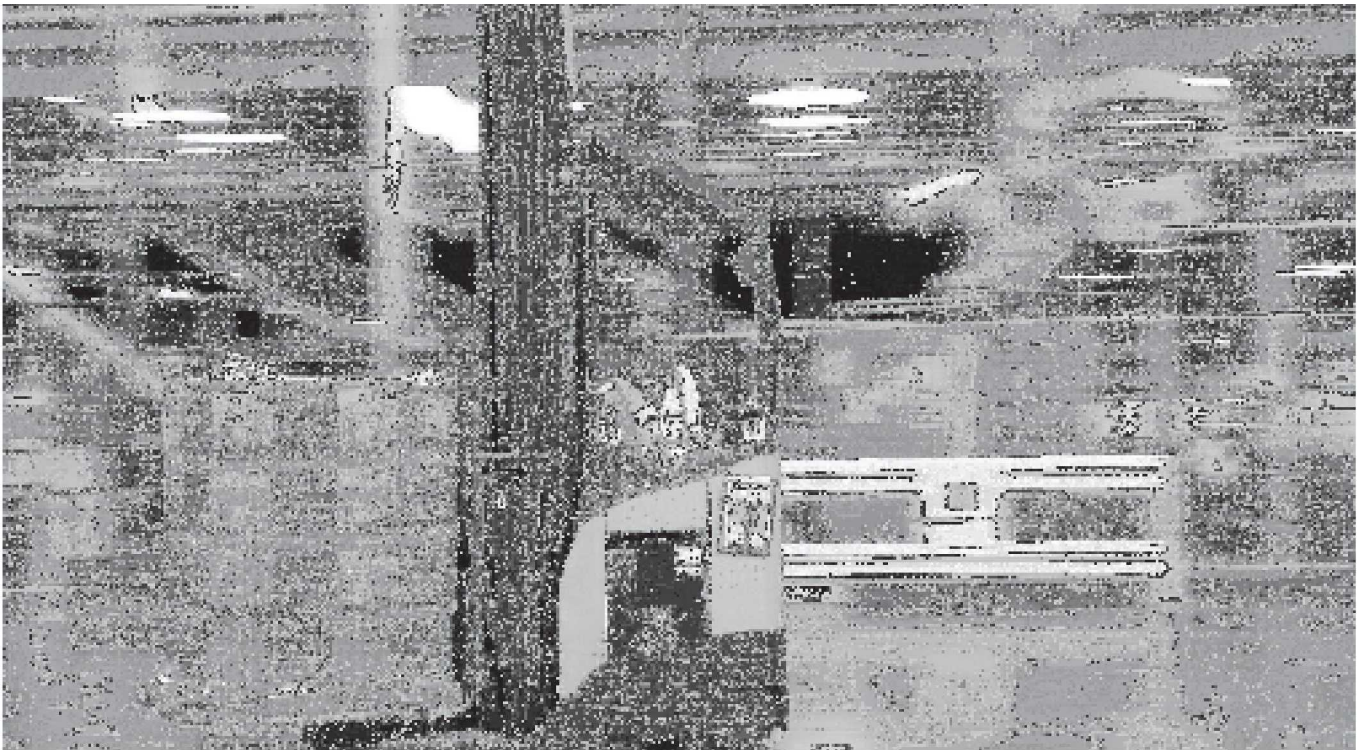
still responsible for paying the state what they don't pay online.

As per its compromise with the Legislature, Amazon has emailed customers a yearly tally of what they've

spent, reminding them they may owe the sales tax on their income tax returns. But that information is not sent to Revenue, so many people ignore it.

Still, "use tax" collections

increased from \$1.4 million in 2011 to \$4.1 million in 2013, the latest year available from the agency, which attributes the rise to awareness the emails generate.



TED S. WARREN Associated Press file photo

A forklift operator moves a pallet of goods at an Amazon.com fulfillment center in DuPont, Wash. In 2016, an exemption that allowed for no sales tax on Amazon purchases will expire.