

Title: **A new way for victims to find help**
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A new way for victims to find help

Aiken organization approves of South Carolina's new domestic violence website

BY TRIPP GIRARDEAU

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Gov. Nikki Haley announced a new website earlier this month intended to help victims and perpetrators of domestic violence in South Carolina,



Haley

and a local nonprofit organization approves of its usefulness. At a domestic violence task force meeting in Columbia on May 19, Haley announced www.SafePlaceSC.sc.gov. She explained the website would offer help to people suffering from abuse and allow offenders to get access to information to help themselves.

The website is accessible for anyone in South Carolina. Users simply go online, type in their city or county and it will relay information on all of the closest

available locations offering help for victims and perpetrators, including hotline/crisis services, housing and hospitals.

In Aiken County, the website shows three locations:

- The Cumbee Center to Assist Abused Persons, 135 Lancaster St., a nonprofit organization that provides temporary shelter, counseling and assistance to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. The center also offers counseling to offenders and education to the general public.

- Stand at the Crossroad Ministries, 808 York St. N.E., a Christian-based residence program created to help, encourage and give support to women are coming out of brokenness – who are committed to learning to live healthy, productive lifestyles.

- Aiken Regional Medical Centers, 302 University Parkway, offers Aiken-area residents a reliable hospital for their urgent health needs. Aiken

Regional is open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

"I think the new website is awesome," said Susan Selden, executive director of the Cumbee Center. "This really is just a new, great way for victims of domestic violence to find help in their community. There still are some people in Aiken County that still don't know we are here."

Haley's office said the site has a 24-hour crisis hotline and safety checklists. There's also a directory of resources that is searchable so people can find information in specific areas of the state.

"It is important to raise awareness of the epidemic that is sexual assault," Selden said. "South Carolina is ranked second highest in the nation for the rate of women murdered by men. This website is just another tool the state has to combat domestic violence."

The governor also laid out

goals at the domestic task force meeting for county-level officials to try to meet by the end of the year in order to receive Safe Place County Certifications.

Those goals include organizing a committee to review domestic violence deaths and adopting human resources policies for dealing with domestic violence situations.

For more information on the website, visit www.safeplacesc.sc.gov.

Anyone interested in finding out more about the Cumbee Center for Abused Persons can visit www.cumbeecenter.org or call 803-649-0480.

For more information on housing at Stand at the Crossroad Ministries visit www.crossroadaiden.org or call 803-502-0285.

Tripp Girardeau is the crime and courts reporter with the *Aiken Standard*.

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The headquarters of The Cumbee Center To Assist Abused Persons is located on Lancaster Street.