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COLUMBIA, S.C. — South Carolina's economic development agency can continue its bonus program for employees, following approval Tuesday by the Budget and Control Board.

The unanimous vote extends through 2016 an incentive pay program aimed at rewarding Commerce Department staff when the agency meets goals in capital investment, overall job creation and jobs added in rural counties. Eligible employees can earn a bonus of up to 10 percent of their salary.

Commerce Secretary Bobby Hitt said the sales incentive pay plan helps recruit, retain and motivate staff.

The agency expects to spend up to \$60,000 on the bonuses this year. Nine employees shared \$50,000 last year. Eleven employees split \$96,000 in 2011. Gov. Nikki Haley, the board's chairwoman, applauded the program.

"This really is so much of why we're getting jobs in rural South Carolina," she said.

There was no other discussion on the program.

The department sought a three-year extension of a program the board has repeatedly approved on a pilot basis since 1998. The agency says 10 employees responsible for recruiting industry to South Carolina are eligible.

Read more here: <http://www.thestate.com/2013/12/10/3150806/commerce-dept-wants-to-extend.html#storylink=cpy>

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