

Title: **Town needs Haley's attention**

Author:

Size: 36.11 square inch

Georgetown, SC Circulation: 8446



EDITORIAL

Town needs Haley's attention

It's been two weeks since the devastating announcement that nearly 250 workers will lose their jobs with the closing of the Georgetown steel mill, and, unfortunately, we are not hearing enough out of Columbia.

Gov. Nikki Haley has made job and industry recruitment a hallmark of her administration. She and other state officials have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars selling the Palmetto State to business leaders, politicians and governments not only in the United States but also across the globe.

And that's all fine and good. You've got to spend money, as the old saying goes, to make money.

It's become routine for the governor's office to issue a press release anytime a business seeks to invest, reinvest or expand in South Carolina, and that's the governor's right.

It's hard to say if Haley and her administration can truly be credited with positive business growth in South Carolina, but to the victor goes the spoils. A governor or a president may not directly alter the economic climate, but he or she does get the credit – and, yes, the blame – from the public.

And lots of good things have been happening for South Carolina. Unemployment is falling, and businesses are investing in the state.

And that's what has made the governor's absence so noticeable since ArcelorMittal's surprise announcement May 14 that it would shutter its Georgetown steel mill – and with it all those good-paying jobs.

Haley's office made no public announcement about the loss of jobs and a major industry. Several days after ArcelorMittal's announcement and still with no word from Haley, the Georgetown

Times reached out to the governor's office. The following day, Haley's press secretary, Chaney Adams, issued a far-too-generic statement that read, in part, "Gov. Haley ... won't stop fighting until every family in Georgetown County has the opportunity to achieve their hopes and dreams."

Adams also noted that the governor's "highest priority has been recruiting jobs" and even touted the recent announcement that Volvo would be bringing 4,000 jobs to the Lowcountry.

Small comfort, though, to the Georgetown workers who, by the end of the third quarter, will find themselves without a job.

Haley and her team have every right to tout good economic news, but they also have the obligation to be there when the news isn't so good – and, in Georgetown's case, potentially devastating. It would have behooved Gov.

Haley to not let her press secretary speak for her.

In fact, it would have made quite the impression had Haley made her way to Georgetown to assure workers and citizens that she's more than words in a press release.

The loss of nearly 250 jobs may not compare to the 4,000 jobs Volvo will bring to Berkeley County, but, for our local steel mill workers, an encouraging word from the state's top politician – and, yes, job recruiter – would go far.

The perception Haley and her team hope to impart is that of the governor working tirelessly to bring jobs to South Carolina. Erasing the sting of losing the steel mill and bringing new, high-paying jobs to Georgetown would help prove that Haley is more than words. She could cement her legacy as a governor who not only talks the talk but also walks the walk, as well.