



Title: **Army listens to SC citizens on possible Fort Jackson cuts**
 Author: By SUSANNE M. SCHAFER The Associated Press
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Army listens to SC citizens on possible Fort Jackson cuts

By **SUSANNE M. SCHAFER**

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley reminded an Army delegation Thursday that, as a military spouse, she is part of a community that values Fort Jackson and wants to continue supporting its soldiers in the face of budget cuts that could slash its workforce in half.

"I am a spouse of a soldier that deployed," Haley told the delegation, speaking of her husband, Michael, who deployed for a year to Afghanistan as a member of the South Carolina Army National Guard.

"We want you to understand that Fort Jackson is part of our family," the governor said, arguing that the Army's largest training site is more to the state than a source of jobs and federal financial input.

"There's never a soldier or veteran that we want to be in need," Haley said, leading a series of speakers who touted the community's military-friendly history and the strength of its ties to the 100-year-old installation and its 7,000 soldiers and civilians.

BY THE NUMBERS

45,000

Soldiers who go through basic combat training every year at Fort Jackson

30,000

Soldiers who attend ad-

vanced military training classes at Fort Jackson

Each year, another 30,000 attend advanced military training classes or attend military specialty schools on the installation, such as those for chaplains, drill sergeants and military financial or human resource officers.

The economic blow of the potential cuts would amount to a loss of 8,000 jobs in the region around the Columbia-based installation and a loss of \$189 million annually to the local economy, according to a University of South Carolina

Moore School of Business study described several times by the Fort Jackson boosters.

Brig. Gen. Roger Cloutier, who led the Army delegation, met Thursday morning with Columbia Mayor Steve Ben-

jamin and others concerned about the cuts.

Opening the Thursday afternoon community "listening session," Cloutier told the hundreds of attendees who filled the pews of a local Baptist church, "Your voices matter. Not a single decision has been made."

The one-star general said he expects the Army to make a decision on the potential cuts in the late spring, with an announcement coming in the early summer. Because of the pressure of the budget cuts, the reductions could begin by Oct. 1, he said.

If the Congressionally approved cuts go ahead as planned, the Army has said it would have to slash troops from 500,000 to 420,000 soldiers and severely shrink installations such as Fort Jackson.

Some supporters argued to the team that, instead of making cuts at Fort Jackson, the Army should consider closing down smaller basic training sites at installations in other states, such as Fort Benning in Georgia, Fort

Leonard Wood in Missouri and Fort Sill in Oklahoma, and bring all basic training organizations to Fort Jackson.

"Making basic combat training the one and only job of the commanding general at Fort Jackson would improve the training and bring it to the highest level possible," said retired Army Col. Kevin Shwedo, the former deputy commander at Fort Jackson and current head of the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles.

Kathy Dent, a Columbia resident who works with nonprofit organizations that support soldiers and their families, said her family was one of the original groups that helped donate land to found the Army installation nearly 100 years ago.

"My message is that Fort Jackson supports this community, and this community supports Fort Jackson," she said. "I know many veterans who have trained at Fort Jackson who come back here to settle down because they loved it during the time they did their training here."

\$189 MILLION

Potential money that could be lost to the local economy if Army cuts are made

80,000

Soldiers the

Army says it will have to cut if the Congressionally approved plan is not changed

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Title: **Debacle at DHEC cannot be repeated**

Author:

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OUR VIEW

Debacle at DHEC cannot be repeated

Greater checks and balances are needed to ensure credibility of state political appointments.

Gov. Nikki Haley's botched end-run to put a friend in charge of South Carolina's health and environmental protection agency must be used as a teachable moment.

It is a "how-to" manual on bad governance, with one redeeming chapter. The state Senate, thank goodness, raised so many questions and exposed so many weaknesses in the candidate that she withdrew her nomination.

The state thereby avoided having someone in charge of the Department of Health and Environmental Control whose only qualification was being a close personal friend, political ally and campaign contributor to the governor.

We call it an end-run because the selection was made secretly, with virtually no vetting. The former director resigned, and four days later the DHEC board, all hand-picked by the governor, announced her replacement. No one else was considered. The chosen candidate then went to work as a \$74-per-hour temporary employee prior to being confirmed by the Senate.

The vagaries of this process were put into perspective in a column by our colleague in Columbia, Cindi Ross Scoppe:

"Imagine a company with 3,600 employees spread across the state, doing highly specialized work that can have multimillion-dollar and even life-and-death consequences if it isn't done right. The CEO tells the board she wants to resign but agrees to keep it quiet and wait until a replacement can be found.

"The board chairman gets a call from a friend who suggests a friend for the position. ... This candidate has no experience or knowledge about any of the many highly technical areas of the company's business. She has run a handful of large companies, but at least twice she left under questionable circumstances. In between, she has moved around a lot, holding down 10 jobs in the past 21 years — five of them since 2005 alone.

"But she does well in the interview, and so without considering any other candidates — without so much as even asking her for references — the board of directors hires her."

How could this possibly happen? Political appointments are a problem. In this case, both the

board that oversees DHEC and its top administrator were picked by the governor for political reasons. There were no checks and no balances in-house. Thankfully, the Senate did its job by asking hard questions, some of which pointed out Eleanor Kitzman's attendance at a Texas fundraiser for Haley.

A teachable moment for the governor should be that she cannot rule by fiat.

A teachable moment for the Senate is that it is going to have to devote much more scrutiny to all people appointed by this governor to direct a state agency. Citizens, taxpayers and DHEC employees deserve a strong system of checks and balances to control good-old-boy politics.

A teachable moment for the DHEC board is that the Senate, which gives a lot of deference to boards and the governor in their nominees, is going to pay attention to the process and see that it is done responsibly.

And a teachable moment for the state is that we need basic professional requirements to fill certain jobs. It is ludicrous that someone could be in charge of public health with zero background, education or credentials in the field.

That needs to be fixed.

Title: **Hearings prompt call to break up DHEC**
 Author: By Sammy Fretwell and Andrew Shain The State
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Hearings prompt call to break up DHEC

Candidate withdraws her nomination to run environmental, health agency

By Sammy Fretwell and Andrew Shain

The State

COLUMBIA — A tense Senate hearing that apparently prompted the withdrawal of the candidate to run South Carolina's environmental and health agency has rekindled talk of breaking up the department and dispersing its duties to other state agencies.

A day after Eleanor Kitzman pulled her name from consideration as director, Sen. Harvey Peeler, R-Cherokee, said he'll introduce a bill next month to eliminate the Department of Health and Environmental Control.

In the wake of Kitzman's lengthy confirmation hearing a week ago, Peeler said no one can fill the job at DHEC, an agency with so many different responsibilities.

Almost from its inception in the early 1970s, DHEC has been criticized because its duties combine that of a state public health department with that of an environmental protection agency. It is one of South Carolina's largest departments with about 3,500 workers, regulating everything from hospital expansions to pollution discharges.

Now that Kitzman is out of the picture, the DHEC board will meet Wednesday to discuss finding a new director for the post vacated Jan. 8 by Catherine Templeton. In addition to withdrawing Sunday night because of "recent events," Kitzman also quit a temporary DHEC job that was paying her about

\$3,500 for just over a week's work.

"I am concerned that the DHEC confirmation bar is set so high that it's too hard for someone to clear it," said Peeler, who chairs the screening committee that questioned Kitzman last week. "The (Kitzman) confirmation process has proven that."

Under the plan, DHEC's health work would go to the Department of Health and Human Services, while

its environmental oversight would go to either the Department of Natural Resources or Department of Agriculture, said Peeler, a supporter of Gov. Nikki Haley.

Sen. Tom Davis, R-Beaufort, and John Courson, R-Richland, said Peeler's idea to break up DHEC is a good one because the agency is unwieldy. But Columbia Democratic Sens. Joel Lourie and Darrell Jackson said the Kitzman issue boiled down to her lack of qualifications — not the structure of the agency.

"I think the concept of the agency is good," Jackson said. "You've just got to get the right board and get the right director in there."

Kitzman, a former state insurance commissioner in South Carolina and Texas, had no experience in environment or health matters. She ran into criticism in Texas over her fundraising efforts and her ties to the insurance industry.

But the DHEC board picked her in early January without seeking other applications for the more than \$150,000 per-year post vacated by Templeton.

Gov. Haley recommended Kitzman, who is a friend, political ally and campaign contributor to the governor, saying she would make a good director. The board chose Kitzman four days after Templeton resigned Jan. 8.

In a letter Sunday to DHEC board chairman Allen Amsler, Kitzman said she was dropping out. She said a protracted confirmation hearing for her would not benefit the agency's employees, stakeholders or the public.

Kitzman was grilled for four hours last week about her lack of background in environmental and health matters, as well as conflicting statements Democratic senators said she made to the legislative screening committee.



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More intense questioning was expected this week from senators critical of her lack of experience and varying statements.

Jackson and Lourie said the Senate screening process did what it was supposed to do: expose candidates who are unqualified to oversee state agencies.

"It's way too early, in my opinion, to start talking about splitting the agency just because we had a nominee that wasn't well suited for the position," said Lourie, who has been critical of the DHEC board and Kitzman. "The board needs to do what they should have done (many) days ago and conduct an extensive interview process, narrow the list to three or four, and vet them very carefully."

Jackson and Lourie agreed the bar is higher for

DHEC than some other agencies because the department's duties can affect people's health. Under state law, the Senate must confirm nominees to run many state agencies. It rarely turns one down.

Peeler acknowledged that the process the board used to pick Kitzman generated the bulk of the complaints about the nominee.

"It was a head scratcher," he said of how Kitzman was selected. But he also said DHEC is a lumbering agency that is difficult for anyone to manage.

"I want to put out a wanted poster saying we need an expert in politics, an expert in the environment, an expert in hospital construction, an expert in waste, be it septic or toxic, an expert in leading people," he said.

"The vacancy is too large of a thing to fill."

Title: **Gov. Haley opposes borrowing proposal; sponsors tout benefits**
 Author: By Seanna Adcox The Associated Press
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Gov. Haley opposes borrowing proposal; sponsors tout benefits

Governor says it's just like running up credit-card debt

By Seanna Adcox
The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Gov. Nikki Haley is accusing the leader of a powerful House committee of running up South Carolina's credit card with a proposal that borrows \$500 million for building projects across the state.

Haley repeatedly singled out Ways and Means Chairman Brian White

while opposing a measure his committee advanced last week. She called Wednesday for the House to stop the state's first bonding bill in 15 years. White didn't immediately respond.

But Republican co-sponsors say the proposal finances needed projects at today's construction prices while bond rates remain near historic lows.

GOP Rep. Chip Limehouse called it a smart budgeting tool to meet needs without raising taxes. Fellow Republican Rep. Kenny Bingham notes it won't increase what the state spends on interest because old debt is rotating off.



Title: **Jeb Bush is coming to Greenville**
 Author: By Rudolph Bell Staff Writer dbell@greenvillenews.com
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Jeb Bush is coming to Greenville

Former Florida governor to speak March 17 in Verdae as guest of Upstate Chamber Coalition

By Rudolph Bell

Staff Writer

dbell@greenvillenews.com

Former Florida governor and likely GOP presidential candidate Jeb Bush is coming to Greenville next month.

He's scheduled to speak at the Embassy Suites hotel in Verdae on Tuesday, March 17, as the guest of the Upstate Chamber Coalition, a coalition of 13 Upstate chambers,

according to Jason Zacher, vice president of public policy at the Greenville Chamber.

The breakfast event starts at 8 a.m. Cost is \$50 for chamber members and \$85 for non-members.

Bush is also scheduled to speak to the South Carolina

House Republican Caucus in Columbia later the same day.

The brother and son of former U.S. presidents is the latest White House hopeful to schedule a visit to Greenville a year before South Carolina's first-in-the-South presidential primary.

Florida Sen. Marco Rubio was in Greenville last week for a book-signing, and former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee is scheduled to be at the Commerce Club downtown on Friday.

Bush was in Greenville in October to campaign for Gov. Nikki Haley just before she won a second term.

Title: **Nominee for new agency clears hurdle**

Author:

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LOCAL / STATE

Nominee for new agency clears hurdle

The Senate Finance Committee has sent Gov. Nikki Haley's choice to be South Carolina's first Department of Administration secretary to the chamber floor. The nominee, Marcia Adams, now leads the Budget and Control Board, which will cease to exist July 1. A restructuring law Haley signed last year divides its divisions among several new and existing agencies.
— AP

Title: **SNOW FORECASTING FRUSTRATES AREA RESIDENTS, FORECASTERS**

Author: By Romando Dixon Staff writer rdixon@greenvillenews.com

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SNOW FORECASTING FRUSTRATES AREA RESIDENTS, FORECASTERS

North, south have varying results

By Romando Dixon

Staff writer

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Weather is unpredictable and fickle in a lot of places. And Greenville County certainly provides a unique set of circumstances for meteorologists in the Upstate.

WYFF meteorologist Dale Gilbert was one of the many meteorologists in the Upstate dealing with those intricacies ahead of the latest major winter storm. The mountainous terrain in northern Greenville County often results in significantly different weather than

“And that’s what the schools run into because they have to make decisions — since they’re one school district — based on what the entire county is experiencing,” Gilbert said. “Northern Greenville County, with the ice storm the other day, had roads that you couldn’t even drive on. We had 18-wheelers jack-knifing on Highway 25 in northern Greenville County. And because of those kind of slippery conditions for potential buses on those northern

in the southern part of the county.

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FORECASTING

Continued from Page 1A

roads, they had to call off school for the entire county, where maybe it was just wet roads in southern Greenville County.

“So it makes it a challenge for people having to make decisions for the entire county when it comes to school on snow days like this.”

Gov. Nikki Haley declared a state of emergency to mobilize additional state resources should they be needed in the Upstate. The weather forecast for Thursday also forced schools in Greenville County to close for the second time this week because of inclement weather.

“Here, we have to worry more about how the mountains will affect the weather,” Andrew Kimball, meteorologist with the National Weather Service, said. “Every part of the country has a little bit of a unique climate to them, their own concerns.”

Kimball said sometimes his colleagues will joke that an area — San Diego, for example — is easier to forecast because there’s no winter weather. But even there, he figures there could be issues with a front coming off the Pacific Ocean.

Gilbert, who has provided the weather forecast at WYFF for 19 years on the morning show, predicted that areas along

the Interstate 85 corridor in the Upstate would receive the most snow. The I-85 corridor is often referenced when forecasting significant weather events, partially because it’s an easy reference point for most people. The terrain is also part of the reason the I-85 corridor is popular phrase: Most weather flows up from Georgia to South Carolina, Gilbert said.

“You sort of have the flat area of the Piedmont and the Midlands,” he said. “As you start to get into that I-85 corridor, it’s sort of a slight elevation, so it usually gets

a little bit more than what the Piedmont gets.

“If you think about weather as almost kind of like water, it wants to take the path of least resistance,” Gilbert said. “So if you’ve got a storm blowing up from Georgia — the mountains kind of deflect it a little bit — and the flat area right up to the I-85 corridor, it seems to travel pretty easily. So a lot of times we’ll get more there. And because it’s a slight elevation, it’s a little bit colder, and therefore a lot of this weather starts to kick in when it gets there, as opposed to maybe farther to the south where it’s just a little bit warmer.”

It also becomes a challenge to forecast because WYFF’s coverage area is so large, including the Upstate and Western North Carolina, he said. Sometimes the southern Piedmont receives rain, while a little bit of snow falls in Greenwood County and a lot of snow falls in Greenville County.

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Andrew Kimball, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service office in Greenville, checks radar and satellites from his work station Wednesday.

HEIDI HEILBRUNN/STAFF



HEIDI HEILBRUNN/STAFF
 Larry Gabric, meteorologist in charge at the National Weather Service office in Greenville, holds a briefing for the oncoming shift concerning the approaching snow storm Wednesday.

Title: **Carolinas brace for wintry blast**
 Author: By MITCH WEISS and TOM FOREMAN JR.
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Carolinas brace for wintry blast

By MITCH WEISS
 and TOM FOREMAN JR.

The Associated Press

GREENVILLE — Janet Robinson was trying to stay one step ahead of a storm that threatened to dump up to 8 inches of snow across the Carolinas.

So she made a trip late Wednesday morning to a Greenville grocery store and picked up the staples — milk, bread — then grabbed batteries for her flashlights and candles, just in case she lost power.

The store was packed and items were flying off the shelves, she said.

"I guess everyone was watching The

Weather Channel," said Robinson, the 35-year-old mother of two.

Across the Carolinas, people braced for a new storm — just one day after a wintry blast of snow and ice caught much of the region by surprise. Tuesday's storm closed schools and businesses and created treacherous driving conditions that led to hundreds of accidents.

Forecasters said Wednesday's storm threatened to do the same.

In South Carolina, the National Weather Service says up to 8 inches of snow could fall in the Upstate. In North Carolina, up to 8 inches of snow

was expected in the mountains and up to 6 inches of snow across much of the rest of the state.

North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory declared a state of emergency. Many parts of North Carolina received 1 to 3 inches of snow on Tuesday, though much of that melted Wednesday during a period of sunshine and above-freezing temperatures.

Please see **WINTRY** on 9A

MORE INSIDE

Other parts of the Southeast get slammed by winter storm — even delaying an execution in Georgia. **9A**

WINTRY

Continued from 1A

Two people died in separate weather-related crashes Tuesday when their cars slid off roads and struck trees.

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley issued a state of emergency for 31 counties in South Carolina. The declaration directs state agencies to begin coordinating to respond to any emergencies and to help local governments. It also places some South Carolina National Guard members on duty to help.

Haley said she wanted everyone in the Upstate to leave work or school by 5 p.m. Wednesday, go home and stay there.

Sgt. Michael Baker, spokesman for the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, said they're also urging people to

stay off the roads.

"If we get what's anticipated tonight and tomorrow morning, it's going to be very hazardous as far as travel is concerned," he said.

And that's what Robinson was doing — getting out early.

"You never know what's going to happen. You don't want to be driving in the snow. It's too dangerous," she said.

Just ask John Fletcher. A 19-year-old student at Greenville Tech, he was driving in a shopping center parking lot

Tuesday morning when his car slid and narrowly missed hitting a pole. "It was close," he said. If it gets bad, he hopes his classes will be canceled.

Stores in both states were filled with shoppers looking for items to help them get out of a

snowy jam.

"The majority of what we have had, heaters, pipe wrap, insulation and stuff like that, is just about sold out. We do have basic insulation, but nothing for frozen pipes or anything like that," said Chris Herrin, assistant manager of a Lowe's Home Improvement Store in Winston-Salem, N.C.

The store sold out of its ice melt, but Herrin said he expected to get at least six pallets worth in the afternoon, which could be between 600 and 800 bags.

Highway transportation crews in both states were treating roads and bridges with sand, salt and brine.

N.C. Department of Transportation Department spokesman Steve Abbott said they're

optimistic they'll be able to get most of the main roads cleared quickly — even in the western part of the state where places like Boone have been hard hit.

Abbott had a suggestion for drivers: If the weather is as bad as advertised, don't drive.

"We're urging people to stay off the roads, in part because having people stay off the roads means our plow trucks can get through much faster," he said.

But for many, the snow and ice is starting to get to them.

"It's frustrating. You live in North Carolina so that you don't have to deal with it very often. Seems like last year and this year, it's getting us," said Trent Maner, who moved to Winston-Salem from Charlotte two years ago.

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ANOTHER STORM HITS SOUTHEAST

DELAYED EXECUTION

Georgia delayed the execution of its only female death row inmate because of the approaching winter weather. Kelly Renee Gissendaner, 46, had been scheduled to die at 7 p.m. Wednesday.

Gissendaner was convicted of murder in the February 1997 slaying of her husband. Prosecutors said she plotted with her boyfriend in the killing.

The execution has been rescheduled for Monday.

SLEET FALLS IN ALABAMA

About 55 miles northeast of Birmingham in Etowah County, Josie Hicks fretted about the safety of her 3-year-old daughter and 4-year-old son.

Hicks said the pipes already were frozen at the family's apartment in Atlanta, and she was worried the power could go out. So with sleet already bouncing off car hoods outside,

Nicks made a quick trip to Walmart for milk, bread and other food that didn't have to be cooked, and 1-gallon jugs of water.

"I wouldn't mind having some snow for the babies to play in but I don't want them to be freezing," said Hicks. "I'm worried about my babies being warm."

BETTER PREPARED

Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal said he was very confident in the state's preparations.

Following a January 2014 ice storm that crippled met-

ro Atlanta, Deal convened a task force to make recommendations of how to better prepare. He said Wednesday that state agencies have ably handled three weather situations in the past 10 days.

"I believe the lesson we are learning even of this morning as we noted the smaller volume of traffic on the interstates is that the public is willing to be a participating partner," he said.



The Associated Press

A North Carolina Department of Transportation mechanical grader clears Route 70 after snow and frozen ice fell Wednesday in Kinston, N.C.

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The Associated Press

Veronique Pope and Kristina Hardy wipe snow from Pope's windshield as snow falls Tuesday in Kinston, N.C.

Title: Gov. Haley opposes new borrowing bill**Author:****Size: 6.51 square inch****Aiken, SC Circulation: 19635**



Gov. Haley opposes new borrowing bill

COLUMBIA (AP) — Gov. Nikki Haley accused the leader of a powerful House committee Wednesday of running up South Carolina's credit card with a proposal that borrows \$500 million for building projects across the state.

Haley repeatedly singled out Ways and Means Chairman Brian White while opposing a measure his committee advanced last week. She called on the full House to stop the state's first such bonding bill in 15 years.

But White counters the proposal takes care of state infrastructure needs now – at current construction prices – while the cost of borrowing remains near historic lows. The credit card analogy doesn't work, he said, as financing on the 15-year bonds is akin to a mortgage.

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Carolinas brace for wintry blast

BY MITCH WEISS AND
TOM FOREMAN JR.

Associated Press

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"I guess everyone was watching The Weather Channel," said Robinson, the 35-year-old mother of two.

Across the Carolinas, people braced for a new storm — just one day after a wintry blast of snow and ice caught much of the region by surprise. Tuesday's storm closed schools and businesses and created treacherous driving conditions that led to hundreds of accidents.

Forecasters say Wednesday's



AP PHOTO/DAILY FREE PRESS, JANET S. CARTER

A North Carolina Department of Transportation mechanical grader clears Route 70 east near the Shriner's Club after snow and frozen ice fell over Lenoir County, Wednesday, in Kinston, North Carolina.

storm threatens to do the same.

In South Carolina, the National Weather Service said up to 8 inches of snow could fall in the Upstate. In North Carolina, up to 8 inches of snow was expected in the mountains and up to 6 inches of snow across much of the rest of the state.

North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory declared a state of

emergency. Many parts of North Carolina received 1 to 3 inches of snow on Tuesday, though much of that melted Wednesday during a period of sunshine and above-freezing temperatures.

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