

Cabela's in a spat with Texas

Job creation in dispute; outdoor outfitter being wooed by Lowcountry

As South Carolina dangles a controversial tax-break package to lure outdoor outfitter **Cabela's Inc.** to the Lowcountry, at least one state recently asked the retailer to return thousands of dollars in incentive money for failing to live up to its employment promises.

Texas has asked Cabela's to return more than \$28,000 and forfeit another \$200,000 from a state grant for failing to create enough jobs at a store that received economic incentives.

The company agreed to hire 400 people for the store in the city of Buda by Jan. 30, but by that date it employed only 314 workers, the **Austin American-Statesman** newspaper reported. Buda is in the Austin area.

The grant money represents just a small portion of the multimillion-dollar incentive package the company received from state and local governments, the paper said.

Nebraska-based Cabela's, a catalog and retail company, often seeks tax breaks and other incentives by touting its retail outlets as tourist attractions. The expansive stores often include aquariums and wildlife taxidermy displays, among other amenities.

The store's potential as a tourist magnet was a main reason why Palmetto State lawmakers approved an incentive package for an "extraordinary retailer" such as Cabela's, which is said to be scouting sites in North Charleston, specifically the **Ingleside** tract at Interstate 26 and Highway 78.

Opponents of the incentives, including Gov. **Mark Sanford**, say the perks are unfair to other retailers and set a bad precedent for the state.