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SC Strong wins angel recognition

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A North Charleston non-profit that helps former prison inmates start a new life ranks as one of South Carolina's best charities, judging by how much it spends on its programs, the S.C. Secretary of State's Office said Wednesday.

SC STRONG was among 10 angels named by Secretary of State Mark Hammond, and the only Lowcountry nonprofit singled out this year.

The recognition comes as the nonprofit, based in the officers' housing section of the former Charleston Naval Base, is poised to double in size and enroll its first females, board chairman John Tecklenburg said.

SC STRONG uses 98 percent of its contributions on programs. "We don't spend money fundraising and doing a lot of baloney," Tecklenburg said.

The organization has about 28 men in its program, and is rehabilitating its third property on the former base. The charity is a stepchild of the San Francisco-based Delancey Street Foundation, which provides free support and helps SC STRONG keep its costs down. It has an annual budget of about \$410,000 and two employees.

Since those in the program do construction, landscaping and other jobs that earn money, Tecklenburg said, the long-term goal is to make the charity self-sustaining, so it no longer needs donor support.

One state nonprofit earned a "Scrooge" designation – the Myrtle Beach-based S.C. Professional Firefighters Association, which returns only 24 percent of its collections on its programs.