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Furman forum considers growth

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Beauty of area lures residents

By Angelia Davis

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Brady and Jennifer Gilbert are considering moving from Mauldin to northwest Greenville County because the latter, though growing, is "still so beautiful."

"More and more in the area we live in, everything is getting torn down. My wife is a textbook tree hugger, and she's having to walk miles and miles to find a tree to hug," said Brady Gilbert, 28. "We just have a great passion for the outdoors, and we hate to see it going away."

On Tuesday, Gilbert sat with close to 180 people at Furman University, listening to ways to balance conservation with development.

The event was a "Theo-Eco" forum sponsored by the Lilly Center for Theological Exploration of Vocation. The economic, theological/ethical and ecological viewpoints of issues surrounding development were presented by five panelists at the meeting.

Moderator Pam Shucker said one mission of the forum was to consider the costs surrounding land use and examine the guiding ethics and values that affect decisions in that realm.

"Development will come, but how we choose to develop is a component of our ethical philosophy," Shucker said.

Between January 2003 and February 2004, a total of 1,895 subdivision lots were proposed in the northern region, figures show.

"I've heard it said that, without growth, a community dies, and we certainly don't want

that to happen here," she said. "One of the most important things we need to consider as we grow and develop is how to conserve some of the land and some of the natural resources we depend on for the quality of life."

Each of the panelists talked about tools that can enable growth and conservation to co-exist.

Anyone wanting more information about planned projects that are part of the follow-up actions of the forum can call Anne Quattlebaum, coordinator at the Lilly Center, at 294-2511.