



Photo by Daniel J. Lauer

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE — Kevin Patton (from left), Carroll Copeland and Clinton city manager Josh Kay look over a map of the Clinton area Friday afternoon during the city's Hometown 2030: Focus on Retail workshop. Community members and leaders came together to discuss ways Clinton can attract more retail, while helping existing businesses.

Clinton discusses retail plan

By Daniel J. Lauer

Staff Writer

Lowe's, Target, Home Depot, Cracker Barrel, Mast General Store. These are just some of the prospects that participants at the Hometown 2030: Focus on Retail suggested as retail businesses they would like to see in the City of Clinton. Between 30 and 40 community members and leaders representing Presbyterian College, businesses, real estate agencies and city council participated in the two-day workshop last Thursday and Friday.

Moderated by the F.A. Johnson Consulting Group Inc., the workshop was organized with help from Upstate Forever, a nonprofit organization promoting sensible growth in the Upstate.

The intent of the workshop was to bring community members together to outline the needs and desires in Clinton's retail sector. Ned Barrett, a program manager with Upstate Forever, said that, while population growth in the Upstate has been averaging 5 per-

cent each year, the rate of developing land is five times that.

"This is a classic sprawl pattern," Barrett said. "There is a tremendous amount of vacant space in many urbanized areas that can be utilized."

According to the Urban Land Institute's projections, the Upstate will have 234,000 new residents by 2030, including 118,000 new households and 203,000 new jobs.

"Clinton wants some of those jobs, some of those new residents and households," said Barrett. "This is the challenge that Clinton is facing and they are willing to sit down, talk about it, and not look the other way."

Fred Johnson II, Esq., the managing principal of F.A. Johnson Consulting Group, said that they will gather the data, ideas, questions and concerns presented over the two-day period and develop recommendations for Clinton.

"The city is already doing an excellent job, better than most or all towns in the state, in terms of planning," Johnson said. "A fair number

of recommendations will be those technical implementation steps that need to be done to give the city the tools it needs to market from a retail perspective."

City manager Josh Kay said he is looking forward to receiving the report but doesn't think all of the recommendations will target specific businesses.

"It is more like a compass rather than a road map," Kay said. "I don't anticipate being given 'step one through five,' but more of a direction."

Kay emphasized that while new businesses can help increase and improve the vitality of Clinton, one of the priorities of city staff is to help existing businesses in Clinton.

"We are more excited about getting this plan into place and implementing some of the strategies," said Kay. "Now is the time to put these plans into place because when it (the economy) does get better, we want to be on the cutting edge."

The compiled report from F.A. Johnson is expected to be presented to city council in the two months.