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ANDERSON, SOUTH CAROLINA

# Opportunity abounds in Anderson County

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Anderson County is truly, richly blessed — but you already know that. You have a phenomenal amount of lake shore (400 miles) and all of its views and recreational options, as well as proximity to the mountains, Atlanta, Clemson University, ICAR. There are beautiful downtowns, renowned events such as the 2008 Bassmaster Classic, excellent schools, interstate highway with 40 miles of frontage, and pastoral equestrian and agricultural fields. The word I think of first when I look at Anderson County is opportunity.

There are opportunities to create high quality economic development and housing options with features that other counties just don't have (capitalizing on access and recreation). There are opportunities to recruit high-wage industries, emphasizing the region's educational assets and expertise in advanced materials, logistics and automotive research and supply. And there is the opportunity for Anderson County to control its own destiny.

But there are also opportunities for outside entities to come in and dictate to you what your landscape will look like in the future. One perfect example is the proposed Greenpointe construction-and-demolition (C&D) landfill off Hamlin Road in northern Anderson County. This site is near a developing residential area and near Pickens Creek. C&D landfills are not required to have liners and often wind up with demolition materials such as asbestos and lead-based paint. If the landfill meets the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control's (DHEC) permitting guidelines, then permitting could be allowed. The one tool all counties have in controlling the placement of landfills is called a Consistency Determination. DHEC considers whether the proposed project is consistent with local zoning, ordinances, and solid waste management plans. In the past, there has been room in the process for counties to make changes to their plans to prohibit a landfill if it was not desired by local residents. Proposed new DHEC rules will prohibit this option. DHEC will look at local plans, zoning, and other ordinances only once, at the beginning of the permitting process. There will be no opportunity for the county to react.

But Anderson County has an advantage over many in South Carolina. You already have in place "community-based zoning." You are the only county in the Upstate to have this process. Each voting precinct can decide its own land use planning. Thus far, about 20 percent of the county has elected to plan its destiny (a map is available on the county Web site). But the Greenpointe landfill parent company is trying to locate that facility in a precinct that has not yet elected to take advantage of this process. Is that just a coincidence?

The larger issue here is not the landfill itself, but rather, taking advantage of the opportunity to look at your district and your county and decide for yourselves where things should go, now and in the future. We all need landfills. They won't go away, especially as we grow. Anderson County's population grew a whopping 8.6 percent between 2000 and 2007, tying with Spartanburg County and second only to Greenville County.

By comparison, Abbeville, Laurens and Union counties either stayed static or lost population. Lake Hartwell, I-85, and proximity (Clemson, Atlanta) are clearly huge assets. But is there a better place in the county for future landfill capacity?

This decision should be made by Anderson County citizens and not by an outside commercial interest.

Anderson County is poised for great things. Don't miss this opportunity.

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