

## **UPSTATE UPDATE NUMBER 21**

**April 30, 2001**

### ***1. The South Carolina Conservation Bank Act—YOUR HELP IS URGENTLY NEEDED!!***

The South Carolina Conservation Bank Act, one of the most important pieces of environmental legislation introduced in our state's history, needs your help today!!

The bill (Senate No. 297 and House No. 3424) would establish a Conservation Bank to provide a dedicated source of funding for the protection of significant natural and historic resources throughout South Carolina. A board of directors comprised of 15 citizens would be established to make grants or loans from the Bank to purchase, or protect through conservation easements, many of our state's special places for future generations.

The original bill would have transferred to the Conservation Bank about 75 per cent of the proceeds of the State's share of the deed recording fee, which is imposed on all transactions involving the sale of real estate in South Carolina. The fee is currently \$3.70 per \$1,000 of the purchase price, of which the State receives \$1.30 and the county in which the real estate is located receives the remainder. The original bill would have transferred \$1.00 of the \$1.30 fee to the Conservation Bank, generating over \$32 million in funding each year. For example, on a sale of property in Pickens County for \$100,000, the deed recording fee would be \$370, of which the State would receive \$130 and Pickens County would receive \$240. The original bill would have transferred \$100 of this fee to the Conservation Bank.

Because of the State's current budget difficulties, the House Ways and Means Committee amended the bill to transfer 25 cents rather than \$1.00 to the Conservation Bank, beginning next year. In light of the budget situation, this is probably the best we can do. If enacted, the amended bill would

provide about \$8 to \$9 million next year to the Conservation Bank. This is certainly not everything we had hoped for when the legislative session began, but it is a whole lot better than what we have now, which is a meager \$3 million per year for the State Heritage Trust program. Hopefully, the State budget will improve next year, and we can persuade the General Assembly to return to the original concept of applying the full \$1.00 to the Bank.

But right now we must focus on the current legislative session. We regret to report that even the amended bill is now encountering opposition, and we need your help! ***The bill will be debated by the full House this week, and we need you to contact your representatives to urge them to support the legislation.*** Several House members have objected even to the amended bill, including John Graham Altman (Charleston Co.), Jimmy Bales (Richland Co.), Ralph Davenport (Spartanburg Co.), Marion Frye (Lexington Co.), Dwight Loftis (Greenville Co.), Walton McLeod (Newberry Co.), Skipper Perry (Aiken Co.), Alfred Robinson (Pickens Co.), and Charlie Sharpe (Aiken Co.). It is especially important that these representatives be contacted!

The addresses and phone numbers for all members of the House are available at [www.scstatehouse.net](http://www.scstatehouse.net).

***THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF THIS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT LEGISLATION!!***

## ***2. Upstate Population Tops 1 Million!***

The Census 2000 numbers are out and they confirm what you already know – ***the Upstate's population is booming!!***

In the last decade, ***our region's population grew by 39 people every day***, increasing the total by more than 144,000. As the following table shows, this is a trend that started around 1950 when Upstate population growth began a steady exponential climb upward from 535,247 to the present total of 1,045,686, nearly doubling in 50 years.

UPSTATE POPULATION GROWTH 1950-2000							
	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	Daily Increase 1990-2000
Anderson	90,664	98,478	105,474	133,235	145,196	165,740	5.63
Greenville	168,152	209,776	240,546	287,913	320,167	379,616	16.29
Laurens	46,974	47,609	49,713	52,214	58,092	69,567	3.14
Oconee	39,050	40,204	40,728	48,611	57,494	66,215	2.39
Pickens	40,058	46,030	58,956	79,292	93,894	110,757	4.62
Spartanburg	150,349	156,830	173,724	201,861	226,800	253,791	7.39
Upstate	535,247	598,927	669,141	803,126	901,643	1,045,686	39.46
South Carolina	2,117,027	2,382,594	2,590,516	3,121,820	3,486,703	4,012,012	143.42

U. S. Bureau of Census, 1960-2000.

Four of the six Upstate counties currently rank among the state's top 15 in total population (Greenville No. 1; Spartanburg No. 4; Anderson No. 7; Pickens No. 13). What isn't so obvious when looking at the totals, however, is the *rate of growth*, or the percentage by which population has increased in the last decade. While the Upstate's population as a whole grew by 15.98 per cent (slightly higher than the state average of 15.10 per cent), Laurens County's rate of growth was the highest among the six Upstate counties at 19.75 per cent, while both Greenville and Pickens Counties experienced growth rates of over 18 per cent.

What do all these numbers mean? They mean that during the last 10 years, approximately 53,000 new households have been established in the Upstate. Assuming an average of one acre for every two dwelling units, 26,500 acres of Upstate land were transformed to residential development alone during the 1990s to accommodate these new residents.

If we're keeping pace with the national average of nearly 40 square feet of retail space per capita, then we also added more than 5.7 million square feet of shopping space which, in the Upstate, required 28,800 new parking spaces. And that's just retail!

That's not all. The 96,000 or so cars that came with our new residents are generating more than 1.1 billion vehicle miles on our roads and highways every year. Our schools have made room for at least 13,000 new students, often by adding portable buildings or by overcrowding classrooms.

The bottom line is this: We live in an extremely attractive and economically healthy part of the country. This is a great place to live! More

and more businesses and industries are moving to the Upstate, bringing new job opportunities for both longtime residents and newcomers.

This kind of economic growth can be great for the Upstate—as long as we avoid the mistakes that have gotten regions like Atlanta into so much trouble. Now it is more important than ever to plan ahead for the growth that we will continue to experience in the decades to come. ***If there was ever a wake-up call for preparing and implementing land use plans in the Upstate, these census numbers are it!***

### ***3. Upstate Forever's Green Development Conference On May 8, 2001—There's Still Time To Register!***

You still have time to register for *Upstate Forever's* conference on ***Green Development: New Directions in Land Use and Design*** on May 8, 2001 at the Palmetto Expo Center in Greenville from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. An impressive group of experts will be coming to Greenville to share their expertise on the exciting green development movement and how it is dramatically changing the way sites are developed, buildings are constructed, and energy is consumed. To see the agenda for the conference, please visit our web site, [www.upstateforever.org](http://www.upstateforever.org). We look forward to seeing you there!

### ***4. Anderson County's Loss Is Pickens County's Gain!***

We were disappointed to learn that Jeff Ricketson recently left his position as Director of Planning in Anderson County to work as a private consultant. Jeff was instrumental in establishing and implementing Anderson County's innovative community-based zoning program, which he describes in a great article he wrote in our last newsletter. Selfishly, we wanted Jeff to remain in Anderson and continue moving the zoning program forward.

But we felt better with the news that Jeff has been retained by Pickens County to advise them, among other things, on launching a similar community-based zoning program in that county. For the last two years, this is exactly what *Upstate Forever* has been urging the Pickens County

Council to do. With Jeff now on board, let's hope that such a program will soon be a reality in that county.

### **5. *Reedy River Management Plan Completed!***

The Reedy River Task Force wrapped up almost two years of work with the publication this month of a spectacular report featuring beautiful photographs and maps of the river and a host of recommendations on how to protect, restore and enhance this wonderful resource for future generations. Congratulations to all of the members of the Task Force and to Barry Beasley and his staff at the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources for a job well done. You can obtain the report by calling Barry at 803-734-9095. Now the hard work begins—we need to implement the recommendations!

### **6. *Congratulations, Hal!***

We are delighted to report that Hal Frampton, a Furman University student who worked for *Upstate Forever* as an intern during the winter term, was recently named a Truman Scholar. Hal did a superb job for us in compiling and analyzing information about the various special purpose districts in the Upstate. Way to go, Hal—we are proud of you!!

### **7. *Quote of the Week.***

“But until citizens demand stronger land-use regulations that include some form of zoning, they will not get better protection from what now is unrestrained growth in Spartanburg County.”

Spartanburg Herald-Journal Editorial  
April 8, 2001