

UPSTATE UPDATE NUMBER 34

June 24, 2002

Upstate Forever's Monthly Bulletin on Important Issues and Events in the Upstate

1. *The 2000 Census Numbers Are In: What They Tell Us About The Upstate.*

The 2000 Census numbers are finally in, and they provide some eye-opening insights into the people and resources of the Upstate and the rates and patterns of development. Six major categories are discussed below.

A. *Population.*

The Upstate's population is booming! From 1990 to 2000, the region's population increased by 144,000, which translates into a rate of **39 people per day**. As the following table shows, this is a trend that started around 1950 when the region's population growth began a steady exponential climb from 535,247 to 1,045,686 in 2000, 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 these totals is the rate of growth or the percentage by which population 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.

By using some generally accepted standards, we can better understand the impact of these population numbers. During the last 10 years, approximately 53,000¹ new households have been established in the Upstate, consuming over 26,000 acres of land.² We have also added more than 2.85 million square feet of shopping space³ requiring 14,250 new parking spaces.⁴ And that’s just retail! The 96,000⁵ cars that came with our new residents are traveling more than 1.1 billion vehicle miles⁶ on our roads and highways every year. Our schools have made room for at least 13,000⁷ new students, often by adding portable buildings or by overcrowding classrooms.

It is astonishing to realize that all of these dramatic changes in the Upstate took place in a period of only 10 years!

B. Education and Compensation Levels.

Among the state’s 46 counties, four of the top 15 with the highest percentage of college graduates are in the Upstate (Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg.) It is not surprising, therefore, that five of the 15 counties with the highest median household income also are located in the Upstate region (Anderson, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg).

EDUCATION AND INCOME IN THE UPSTATE						
County	Education		Income			
	Residents with Bachelor's Degree (2000)		1999 Median Income		Percentage Change 1989-1999	
	Per Cent	Rank in State	Income	Rank	Per Cent	Rank
Anderson County	15.9%	19	\$36,807	12	10.1%	19
Greenville County	26.2%	4	\$41,149	5	9.0%	22
Laurens County	11.7%	31	\$33,933	22	5.0%	42
Oconee County	18.2%	*14	\$36,666	13	9.8%	20
Pickens County	19.1%	10	\$36,214	15	5.9%	35
Spartanburg County	18.2%	*14	\$37,579	11	7.5%	30
South Carolina	20.4%		\$37,082		8.8%	

Data Source: U.S. Bureau of Census *2- way tie

¹ Based on an average of 2.7 persons per household, as suggested by Kaiser et al. in *Urban Land Use Planning*, 1995.

² Based on average of 2.0 dwelling units per acre.

³ Assumes 19.79 square feet of retail per capita as suggested by the International Council of Shopping Centers.

⁴ Assumes 5 spaces per 1,000 square feet of retail, as presently required by the Greenville County Zoning Ordinance.

⁵ Based on 1.8 vehicles per household, as stated in U.S. Department of Energy’s 1994 Residential Transportation Energy Consumption Survey, South Atlantic Division.

⁶ *Ibid*, 22,400 Vehicles Miles Traveled per household.

⁷ Greenville County School District uses a standard of 40 students per 100 households, while the national standard is 25 students per 100 households.

C. *Housing Values.*

The housing stock in the Upstate region ranks among the state's most expensive and is increasing in value at rates faster than those in most other counties. While the state's median home value was \$94,900 in 2000, three Upstate counties exceeded that threshold (Greenville, Oconee, and Pickens), and five were ranked among the state's top fifteen. In addition, of the 15 South Carolina counties with the fastest appreciation rates, five are in the Upstate.

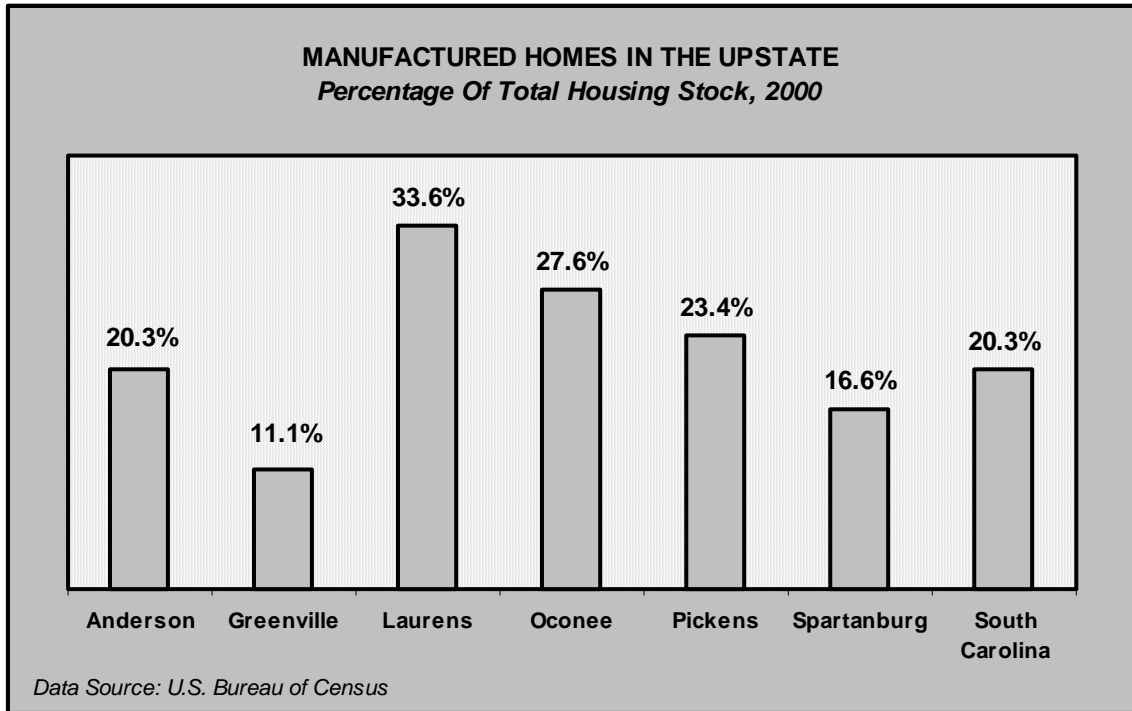
MEDIAN HOUSE VALUE IN UPSTATE SOUTH CAROLINA				
County	Median House Value		Change Since 1990 (after adjusting for inflation)	
	Value	Rank in State	Percentage Change	Rank in State
Anderson County	\$88,200	14	29.3%	13
Greenville County	\$111,800	6	33.2%	8
Laurens County	\$74,800	25	32.8%	9
Oconee County	\$97,500	10	33.4%	7
Pickens County	\$96,100	11	25.6%	19
Spartanburg County	\$91,100	13	32.5%	10
South Carolina	\$94,900		21.6%	

Data Source: U. S. Bureau of Census

Also noteworthy is that some of the most expensive homes are in counties with little or no land use regulations. For example, Oconee County has no zoning (except for three cities) and very few development standards. Nevertheless, the county's median house value of \$97,500 and its appreciation rate of 33.4 per cent (1990-2000) are among the highest in the state.

D. *Manufactured Housing*

While the Upstate has its share of high-priced homes, it also has a significant and increasing number of manufactured homes. Anderson, Laurens, Oconee, and Pickens Counties either meet or exceed the state's average percentage of total housing stock comprised of manufactured homes. In contrast, Greenville and Spartanburg Counties have the third and sixth lowest percentages in the state, respectively.



Laurens County ranked ninth in the state in the percentage of growth in manufactured housing stock between 1990 and 2000. With an increase of 89.4 per cent, Laurens was the only Upstate county that exceeded the state's average of 50.7 per cent (Anderson, 44.1; Greenville, 40.6; Oconee, 38.5; Pickens, 48.4; Spartanburg, 47.8.)

PERCENTAGE OF 2000 POPULATION WHO LIVED IN A DIFFERENT STATE OR COUNTRY IN 1995		
County	Per Cent	Rank in State
Anderson	8.0	*28
Greenville	16.0	9
Laurens	6.2	37
Oconee	11.5	15
Pickens	11.9	14
Spartanburg	9.0	18
South Carolina	0.9	

*Source: US Bureau of Census *2-way tie*

E. The Changing Face of the Upstate.

Newcomers from out-of-state account for a significant portion of the Upstate's population growth. While coastal counties attracted larger numbers than other parts of the state (Beaufort and Horry Counties ranked first and second, respectively), three Upstate counties ranked among the state's top 15 in the percentage of residents who did not live in South Carolina in 1995.

F. Commuting Time.

Strong economic growth means jobs, and when jobs are nearby, our residents don't have to spend as much time commuting to work. All six of the Upstate counties fell below the state's average travel time to work (24.3 minutes), with Pickens being the highest among the six (24 minutes) and Greenville the lowest (21.6). Nevertheless, South Carolinians are spending an average of 18.5 per cent more time commuting than they did in 1990, a fact undoubtedly attributable to the sprawling patterns of residential development that separate workers from their jobs.

What Do The Numbers Tell Us?

We can draw some general conclusions from the numbers and graphs discussed above:

- Assuming that the Upstate's population growth rate does not change (indications are that it will actually increase), by the year 2020, there will be approximately 288,000 more people living in our region, 106,000 more homes, 190,000 more cars, and 26,000 more students. This phenomenal growth, if not managed properly, will have profoundly adverse impacts on our region and quality of life.
- Counties with a more highly educated workforce attract the most lucrative jobs and have the most expensive housing stock.
- The lack of land use regulations does not necessarily assure the affordability of housing (e.g., Oconee County).
- Counties with the fewest land use regulations have the most manufactured housing (e.g. Laurens County).
- Commuting times increase with sprawling growth patterns.

We also can identify some of the solutions to the problems caused by rapid growth and development:

- We must make a serious commitment to planning for the dramatic growth that is coming.
- We must recognize that local government has a critically important role to play in managing growth, protecting property values, and enhancing our quality of life through the enactment of zoning ordinances, development standards and similar measures.

- We must provide significant local funding to protect open space.
- We must be prudent about where infrastructure (roads, water and sewer) and schools are built.
- We must make a commitment to affordable housing.
- We must encourage and promote mixed-use developments, which reduce commuting times and dependence on cars.

The bottom line is that we live in an extremely attractive and economically healthy part of the country. This is a wonderful place! The great challenge facing the Upstate is to keep it that way and to avoid the mistakes that regions like Atlanta have made. But with courage, leadership and vision, we can do it!

2. Greenville County Parking Lot Standards Ordinance Sent Back to Committee! ☺

Over 400 concerned citizens packed the chambers of Greenville County Council on June 18 for what they thought would be third and final reading of the parking lot landscaping ordinance. What they received instead was a shocking and painful slap in the face. By a vote of 8 to 4, the ordinance was returned to the Public Service, Planning and Development (PSPD) Committee for “further study,” even though that committee has been studying it for over two years!

The meeting got off to a very bad and inauspicious beginning when the County Council refused to hear from the public. Council member Cort Flint made a motion to allow public comment on the ordinance because it had been amended after the public hearing. Mr. Flint pointed out that only half of the 30 minute “public session” for the meeting had been claimed so there was plenty of time for additional public input. Nonetheless, the motion was defeated, prompting an audible gasp from the audience.

When the ordinance was reached on the agenda, County Council member Bob Taylor quickly made a motion to send it back to the PSPD Committee. With little discussion, the motion passed.

In early June, when the ordinance was considered by Council at second reading, an amendment was approved that substantially reduced the required number of shade trees in parking lots. Supporters of the ordinance were hopeful that at the June 18 meeting, the Council would reinstate the

original standards, which had been unanimously approved by the Greenville County Planning Commission. Even those standards (1 shade tree per 20 parking spaces) are considerably less stringent than York County (1 per 15), Lexington County (1 per 8), and Charleston County (1 per 10). It would have been bad enough if the Council had refused to reinstate the original standards, but what a shock it was to watch them effectively kill the entire ordinance by sending it back to committee!

This ordinance has been considered at no less than 15 separate meetings of the Planning Commission and its appointed committee, the PSPD Committee and County Council over the last two years. Over 130 persons showed up for the public hearing on the ordinance, where every speaker urged its adoption. There has truly been overwhelming public support for the ordinance. It is disingenuous of Council to suggest that the ordinance needs “further study.” Why don’t they acknowledge their true intent, which is to simply make it go away?

County Council member Scott Case described the ordinance as “socialistic.” We wonder how his colleagues on the York, Lexington and Charleston County Councils feel about being described as supporters of socialism for approving their parking lot ordinances. Throughout the country, in fast-growing areas like Greenville, these ordinances are now as standard as setback requirements.

During the meeting, Council member Taylor made the ridiculous argument that the ordinance is not needed because there is so much support for it. Everyone knows that there are plenty of developers who will do only what the law requires and nothing more. This is particularly true for the large out-of-state developers whose only interest in Greenville County is that it’s just another place to make money. Cherrydale is a case in point. The landscaping plan for the parking lot was discarded after the developer learned that the county did not have a landscaping ordinance.

Trees are not just nice to look at. They provide benefits for wildlife habitat, air quality and water quality. Through the miracle of photosynthesis, trees convert carbon dioxide to oxygen. Tree islands in parking lots, if properly designed, can absorb storm water runoff and keep it out of our rivers and streams. A study conducted by NASA showed that the summer air temperature in a mall parking lot was as high as 120 degrees, while the temperature in the tree islands in the parking lot was only 89 degrees, a difference of 31 degrees! Multiply that differential by all of the blacktop

that will be laid down in Greenville County in the coming years, and you can see the benefits of an ordinance like this.

So what does this mean? Right now, we aren't sure. What *could* happen is that the PSPD committee can request that the Planning Commission staff furnish them additional information, after which the ordinance could be amended to incorporate the original or different standards. It would then be resubmitted to County Council for consideration and a vote.

Or, it could sit idle for months. We just don't know.

But one thing is certain: ***Upstate Forever will not give up!!*** We will continue to advocate for this important ordinance until it is adopted by Greenville County Council - either the current Council, or one with new faces. Of that, you can be sure.

And we will need your help and support every step of the way!!

Voting to send the ordinance back to committee: Dill, Selby, Kingsbury, Case, Brooks, Taylor, Johnson, Cook. Voting against: Flint, Norris, Gibson, Henderson. Please let your representative know how you feel about the vote. Contact information for the Council members is included at the end of this Upstate Update.

3. Pickens County Development Standards Ordinance Under Attack!

A firestorm of controversy has erupted in Pickens County over the recently approved revisions to the Development Standards Ordinance. A new group called Just Hicks, Inc. has run several full-page ads in The Easley Progress attacking the ordinance and making all kinds of scurrilous claims against the County Council members. Another group called United Taxpayers and Property Owners Alliance (UPOTA) also has been formed with its stated mission to rescind the DSO.

Upstate Forever Executive Director Brad Wyche has come to the defense of Council, submitting the following letter to The Easley Progress for publication:

“Change is hard, whether it’s watching your child grow up, moving to another place, mourning the loss of a loved one, or changing careers. It’s also hard seeing what is happening to Pickens County. The county’s population is increasing at the rate of 32 people per week. Its open land is being converted to development at the rate of 23 acres per week—that’s the equivalent of a brand new Haywood Mall every month in Pickens County.

“There are many who wish all of this growth and change would just stop. It’s a heartfelt view, but it’s totally unrealistic. Pickens County will continue to grow. We cannot, and should not, build a wall around the county and say, ‘No more people, no more business.’ We need growth for jobs and economic opportunities. The issue facing the citizens of Pickens County is not whether growth will occur, but how and where it will occur.

“One option is to sit back and do nothing and just let growth happen. That would be a bad decision for two basic reasons. First, Pickens County is one of the most beautiful places in the world. The potential for the county to benefit economically from its beauty is phenomenal but mainly untapped. Tourists spend money, lots of it. Why are so many of them traveling to places like Charleston, Colorado and Europe to see beautiful places, when there so many wonderful places to see and enjoy right here in Pickens County? Did you know that Orangeburg County receives more tourism revenues than Pickens County?! If Pickens County wants to capitalize on its beauty, then measures must be adopted to protect it. We shouldn’t kill the goose that is ready to lay the golden egg.

“The second reason is economic. Often overlooked in the great debate about growth and land use is the fact that local government agencies (i.e., the taxpayers) provide a range of services to development—roads, water, sewer, fire and police protection, EMS, and schools. Taxpayers should have a keen interest in how much is being spent to provide these services since they are underwriting the costs. If anything can be built anywhere, government will have to spend more to provide services to developments. Studies have shown that this cost is 20 to 25 per cent more than what is spent by comparable communities that manage growth. That would translate into millions of dollars of savings for Pickens County.

“Pickens County Council has done the right thing in rejecting the ‘do nothing’ option. It should be commended and congratulated for revising and strengthening the County’s Development Standards Ordinance (DSO)—an ordinance that establishes basic standards for the quality of future

development in the county. The Council should also be thanked for recognizing that the ordinance is not perfect and for appointing a task force to discuss and recommend changes.

“There have been some wild claims and accusations about the revised DSO. I urge the citizens of Pickens County, before jumping to any conclusions, to get a copy of the DSO and read it. You will see that the vast majority of these accusations have no merit. To the contrary, I believe most citizens will be pleased with what they read. There are standards, for example, on sexually oriented businesses, hazardous waste disposal sites, communication towers, mining operations, and junk yards. There are performance standards on noise, lights, odors, and toxic emissions from commercial and industrial operations in the county. There are buffering requirements between different types of land uses and screening requirements for waste dumpsters. There are open space requirements in new residential developments, and a 50-foot buffer now protects Lakes Hartwell, Keowee and Jocassee. These are urgently needed and essential standards for a county that is growing and developing so rapidly.

“The recent amendments have strengthened the DSO and added several new important provisions. These revisions are a big change for Pickens County, and they are hard for some citizens to accept. But most people adjust to change and end up doing just fine. I’m confident that will be the result, too, for the DSO.”

4. Upstate Forever Seeks Preservation Of Natural Areas At Morton Elementary School.

Upstate Forever, of course, was extremely disappointed with the Board’s decision to close Simpsonville Elementary School, but that issue is behind us. We now have two basic hopes: first, that the school’s historic buildings will be preserved and continue to be an asset for the community and second, that the new Morton Elementary is a tremendous success.

We were distressed to learn recently that the Morton plan calls for the removal of virtually all of the trees at the site. This includes the substantial wooded area on the western side of the property that now provides an important buffer against the noise and pollution from I-385. Within this area is a small stream and a nature trail built by the students and teachers at Morton. Tree identification signs have been installed along the trail, and science teachers take students down to the stream to study aquatic life.

Adjoining this wooded area is an area known as “the wildlife meadow” which the students and teachers maintain. It, too, would be destroyed under the current plan.

We recall the statement by School Board member Ann Sutherlin at the March 26, 2002 Board meeting about the trees at Morton and how important and valuable they would be to the new school. The grading plan, however, has “Remove Woods” directives over all of these trees and an “X” mark through the wildlife meadow.

There is absolutely no reason to do it this way. There is plenty of land at the site to accommodate the new school, completely protect the nature trail and wildlife meadow, and preserve all of the wooded area on the western side of the property. *Upstate Forever* presented to the School Board an alternative conceptual plan that shows how this can be done. The new school can be moved closer to the road and put on the site of the existing school, which would eliminate the need for the storm water basin on the western side of the property. We made no change in the size or design of the new school; only its location on the site has changed. Similarly, we changed the location of the parking areas, but the number of spaces is the same. There are no doubt other ways to redesign the plan so that the property’s natural amenities will be preserved.

As a result of our efforts, there is some good news. One of the members of the School Board became actively involved and asked the School District and its contractor, Institutional Resources, to review the grading plan. Last week they decided to change the plan to preserve approximately one-third of the trees at the site. Most of the trees are in the southern section of the site. The bad news is that they did not change the location of the school and thus, the nature trail, wildlife meadow, and most of the trees on the western side of the property will be lost. But we hope that a new nature trail can be built in the preserved area.

Last year *Upstate Forever* requested the School Board and Institutional Resources to establish overall “green standards” for the \$700 million school construction and renovation project. We were pleased when the School Board agreed with our position and authorized the hiring of a consultant to develop such standards. The problem, however, is that work is already proceeding at several schools, such as Morton, but the standards are not in place. Strong standards should avoid controversies like the one at Morton because they would include basic conservation development

principles. We understand that the School Board and Institutional Resources are very close to making a final decision on the consultant. We hope the consultant is on board soon!

5. South Carolina Rehabilitation Incentives Act Signed Into Law!

On May 1, 2002, Governor Hodges signed into law the South Carolina Rehabilitation Incentives Act, which creates two state income tax credits to encourage the preservation of historic buildings in our state:

(1) A 10% tax credit for qualified rehabilitation expenses on income-producing historic buildings that also qualify for the 20% federal investment tax credit; and

(2) A 25% tax credit for rehabilitation expenses on a “certified historic residential structure.” The Act sets forth several requirements for the residential credit:

(a) Pre-approval of the work must be obtained from the South Carolina Department of Archives and History;

(b) The project must meet the Standards for Rehabilitation issued by the U.S. Secretary of Interior;

(c) The building must be (i) listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places, (ii) a contributing property in a National Register-listed historic district, (iii) considered by the Department of Archives and History to be individually eligible for the National Register, or (iv) an outbuilding of an otherwise eligible property;

(d) The taxpayer must spend at least \$15,000 within 36 months; and

(e) The taxpayer must claim the credit in equal amounts over five years. If any unused credit remains after five years, the remainder can be claimed over the next five years.

The Act takes effect for taxable years after 2002. The Department of Archives and History will make applications available after January 1, 2003, and the credit can be claimed on projects that begin after June 30, 2003. For more information, contact Deborah Jackson at the Department of Archives and History at Jackson@scdah.state.sc.us or at 803-896-6100.

6. *Quote of the Month.*

“Consider this: all the ants on the planet, taken together, have a biomass greater than that of humans. Ants have been incredibly industrious for millions of years. Yet their productiveness nourishes plants, animals, and soil. Human industry has been in full swing for little over a century, yet it has brought about a decline in almost every ecosystem on the planet. Nature doesn’t have a design problem. People do.”

William McDonough and Michael Braungart, Cradle to Cradle (North Point Press 2002), p.16.

Greenville County Council

District 17	Joe Dill 228 Highway 101 Landrum, SC 29356	Home: 895-7387 Fax: 895-7387
District 18	Stephen C. Selby 904 Lamp Light Drive Greer, SC 29652	Home: 877-0835 Fax: 877-0835
District 19	Mark C. Kingsbury 12 Blanche Drive Greenville, SC 29617	Home: 294-6586 Fax: 294-6586
District 20	Scott Case - Vice Chm. 430 Beckenham Lane Greenville, SC 29609	Home: 233-3893 Fax: 232-0709
District 21	Phyllis Henderson 110 Silver Creek Ct. Greer, SC 29650	Home: 244-0107 Fax: 268-1935
District 22	Bob Taylor 107 Karen Drive Greenville, SC 29607	Home: 242-5100 Fax: none
District 23	Xanthene S. Norris 209 Ackley Road Greenville, SC 29607	Home: 271-6798 Fax: 271-6798
District 24	Cort Flint 7 W. Seven Oaks Drive Greenville, SC 29605	Home: 232-4261 Fax: none
District 25	Lottie Gibson 104 Gettysburg Street Greenville, SC 29605	Home: 277-1796 Fax: 422-1072
District 26	Allen Lee "Bunk" Johnson 4 Welcome View Drive Greenville, SC 29611	Home: 269-6348 Fax: 269-6348
District 27	Dozier Brooks - Chairman 109 Inn Circle Fountain Inn, SC 29644	Home: 862-3661 Fax: 409-8733
District 28	Bob Cook P.O. Box 1127 Mauldin, SC 29662	Home: 967-8062 Fax: 967-8062