

# Upstate Update

NUMBER 48  
OCTOBER  
2003

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

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Upstate Forever's Annual Meeting  
November 8, 2003  
Walnut Grove Plantation  
10:30 a.m.

## CELEBRATING OUR 5<sup>TH</sup> YEAR!!

Please let us know by Nov. 3 if you can attend:  
[info@upstateforever.org](mailto:info@upstateforever.org) or  
864-250-0500

This Update Update discusses:

- 1) Action Alert - Why Spartanburg County does not need another landfill
- 2) Action Alert - Alarming information about Upstate air quality
- 3) Action Alert - Improving tax incentives for conservation
- 4) The proposed Wal-Mart in Travelers Rest
- 5) Upcoming Area Events
- 6) Lots o' Links

### **1. Action Alert! Spartanburg County Does Not Need Another Landfill!**

The Palmetto Landfill will soon be full, and its owner, Waste Management, is eager to build a new one just like it in the southern part of the county. There are so many reasons for saying no to the proposal it's hard to know where to begin.

But let's start with South Carolina law, which provides that it is "the policy of the State to encourage a regional approach to solid waste management." (S.C. Code of Laws, Section 44-96-50(C)). There is a clear regional solution to Spartanburg County's waste problems, namely, two major landfills that are located close to the county and that, unlike the Palmetto facility, have many years of capacity remaining. One is Allied Waste's landfill in Anderson County, and the other is Republic Services' facility in Union County, just across the Spartanburg County line. While the exact location of Waste

*Promoting sensible growth and protecting special places in the Upstate*

Management's proposed landfill has not been identified, it's probably no more than 10 miles from the Union facility. Why would we ever want to build another one that close?

Both Allied and Republic want to handle all of Spartanburg County's waste and have made attractive offers. But there's another option that appears to be even better—the County's own landfill at Wellford. There is enough capacity at that facility to take care of all of Spartanburg County's residential waste for another 50 years. Moreover, according to an analysis done by the Spartanburg County Administrator's office, the County could save almost \$1 million per year by diverting some residential waste from Wellford to the Union County landfill and replacing that with fee-producing commercial waste.

But then there's Waste Management, which has made an offer that some say simply can't be refused. They are willing to take care of all of Spartanburg County's residential waste at no charge for the next 20 years and pay an annual "host fee" of \$2.5 million per year. The present value of the offer over the 20-year period is \$34 million.

But a lot more than money is at stake here. There are serious quality of life issues associated with landfills. While the design, operation and maintenance of landfills have improved significantly since the "open dumping" era, even the best-managed facility has adverse impacts. There are the waste trucks that constantly come and go from the facility—about 200 per day at Palmetto. Odors, dust and litter are inevitable, and the decomposition of waste in the landfill itself creates two dangerous by-products: methane gas and contaminated leachate.

There is also an economic impact. Just take a look at the area around the Palmetto Landfill—what could have been an economic hot spot for the county (the Interstate 85/Highway 29 intersection) is basically dead. The reason is obvious—no one wants to live or operate a business near a landfill. If a new landfill is approved in the southern part of the county, it, too, will create a similar dead zone.

In assessing the true benefits and costs of the Waste Management offer, these impacts must be considered.

In fact, such impacts are why landfills are widely considered the "last resort option" for handling solid waste. The most preferred option is source reduction, where waste is not even created—for example, by reusing a container rather than throwing it away. The next preferred option is recycling, which turns materials that would otherwise have become waste into valuable resources. That container, for example, can be recycled into another container rather than being landfilled.

There is vast room for improvement in source reduction and recycling efforts in Spartanburg County. According to DHEC's 2001 Solid Waste Report, the county recycles

only about 20 per cent of its solid waste. In contrast, several South Carolina counties—Charleston, Sumter, Horry, Marlboro, Georgetown and Jasper—recycle more than half of their waste. If Spartanburg County could join this group, existing landfills would last longer and quality of life impacts would be reduced.

Recycling also makes economic sense. The U. S. Recycling Economic Information Study (2001), [www.nrc-recycle.org](http://www.nrc-recycle.org), found that there are now more than 56,000 recycling and reuse establishments in the United States that employ 1.1 million people and generate an annual payroll of \$37 billion. This is more than the mining and waste disposal industry and is comparable to the automobile and trucking sector. Recycling is a true win-win—good for the environment and good for jobs.

Waste Management wants to build a facility that would handle 1.2 million tons of waste per year, but all of Spartanburg County generates only 260,000 tons each year. The math is easy. If the Waste Management proposal is accepted, at the end of 20 years, there will be 20 million tons of waste buried at the new facility that came from outside Spartanburg County. This is, of course, in addition to what has already been disposed of at the Palmetto facility.

For way too long, South Carolina has been the “dumping ground” for the nation’s waste—not just regular garbage, but also nuclear, hazardous, toxic and infectious wastes. That role needs to end. We live in the most beautiful state in the country—it’s no surprise that tourism is now our number one industry. Here in the Upstate, we have become a thriving and diverse business center, home to such companies as BMW, Michelin and Fujifilm, and we are now actively and successfully pursuing the high-tech, knowledge-based industries.

We should be far past the point where waste is considered a source of revenue. We’re better than that. If you live in Spartanburg County, please contact your representative on County Council and urge him to say no to the Waste Management proposal.

**2. Action Alert! Upstate Leads Nation in Rate of Increase in Unhealthy Ozone Levels!**

Air pollution is getting worse in the Upstate. In fact, it has gotten so much worse during the past decade that our region ranks number one in the country for the increase in the number of “unhealthy ozone” days.

According to a report recently released by the Surface Transportation Policy Project, the number of days of unhealthy air in the Upstate nearly tripled from 1993 to 2002, increasing from an average of 7.2 to 19.8 days per year, or 175 per cent, for the decade. Knoxville, Tennessee was a distant second with an increase of 71.2 per cent.

Rank	Metro Area	Average 1993-1997	Average 1998-2002	Per Cent Change
1	Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson, SC	7.2	19.8	175.0
2	Knoxville, TN	25.0	42.8	71.2
3	Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC/SC	22.4	35.6	58.9
4	Greensboro-Winston-Salem-High Point, NC	12.6	19.6	55.6
5	Akron, OH	9.4	14.4	53.2
6	Harrisburg-Lebanon-Carlisle, PA	10.4	15.6	50.0
7	Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, NC	16.0	23.6	47.5
8	Memphis, TN-AR-MS	15.8	23.0	45.6
9	Youngstown-Warren, OH	8.6	12.4	44.2
10	Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon, NJ	15.2	21.8	43.4

The report, *Clearing the Air* (<http://www.transact.org/report.asp?id=227>), ranks metropolitan areas that averaged 10 or more unhealthy days during the period 1993-2002. "Unhealthy" days are those with an Air Quality Index (AQI) of greater than 100 for ozone pollution. (AQI is a measure of air pollution severity established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency). Ozone is a harmful gas formed when nitrogen oxide and volatile organic compounds combine in the presence of sunlight. Cars, buses and trucks are major sources of ozone-producing compounds.

Ozone and other air pollutants have been linked to a host of serious health problems including asthma, cancer, heart disease, strokes, high blood pressure, birth defects, and brain damage.

Asthma attacks alone bring nearly 2 million Americans to emergency rooms each year and account for 17 per cent of all pediatric emergency room visits. Some of the most compelling evidence of how pollution from cars and heavy duty trucks is linked to asthma comes from Atlanta, where during the 1996 Summer Olympics the city made a concerted effort to reduce driving. When a 22.5 per cent reduction in morning traffic levels resulted in a 28 per cent drop in peak ozone levels, acute care visits for asthma fell by over 40 per cent and pediatric hospital emergency room visits for asthma dropped by approximately 11 per cent.

Research has also linked air pollution from cars and heavy-duty vehicles to childhood cancers such as leukemia and Hodgkin's disease. In addition, people with pre-existing heart conditions are especially susceptible to exacerbated heart disease and premature death brought on by exposure to air pollution, and diabetics have twice the risk of heart disease problems from exposure to particulate matter pollution as the general population.

Where we live makes a tremendous amount of difference in how much air pollution we breathe. While some regions of the country have shown significant improvements in ozone pollution, others have experienced an increase in the number of

unhealthy ozone days over the past decade. Nowhere is this more true than right here in our region, where we top the list with the most dramatic increase. Now is the time for Upstate leaders to get serious about “clearing the air” in our region.

There’s some good news and some bad news.

The good news first. The Upstate counties of Anderson, Greenville and Spartanburg have entered into an “Early Action Compact” (EAC) to address our region’s air quality problems and work together to establish a plan to improve them. (These efforts are predominantly driven by the fear of losing federal transportation funding if our air quality does not meet the ozone standards established under the Clean Air Act.) The group submitted an EAC Milestone Progress Report, a non-binding list of strategies proposed by a task force of citizens, policymakers, business leaders and planners from the region designed to reduce ozone levels and improve air quality in the Upstate. The report can be downloaded at the following website: [http://www.greenvillecounty.org/County\\_Administrator/Air\\_Quality.asp](http://www.greenvillecounty.org/County_Administrator/Air_Quality.asp). The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) will review the report and submit to EPA a list of air quality control measures being considered by all South Carolina counties.

Now for the bad news. The current administration is considering serious cuts in a key federal program aimed at stemming air pollution from transportation. The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program provides federal transportation funds to help states and regions implement pollution-cutting transportation projects. Since passage of the Clean Air Act, the CMAQ program has provided more than \$8 billion in funds for transportation improvements to help states reduce pollution. This program, along with other initiatives established under the Clean Air Act, have reduced the aggregate emissions of the six major pollutants by 25 per cent since the law was passed in 1970.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) found that the benefits of the Clean Air Act far outweigh its costs. In its annual report to Congress on the costs and benefits of federal regulations, the OMB quantified Clean Air Act benefits over the past ten years at between \$146 billion and \$230 billion, while the costs range from just \$36 to \$42 billion. To read the report in its entirety, visit this website: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/infoereg/2003\\_cost-ben\\_final\\_rpt.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/infoereg/2003_cost-ben_final_rpt.pdf).

***You can help!*** Now is not the time to be turning our backs on the laws and funding programs that improve air quality and protect public health, especially when medical research continues to demonstrate the link between the two. Urge your representatives in Congress to restore critical funding to the Clean Air Act and CMAQ initiatives. And if you live in the Upstate, commend Anderson, Greenville, and Spartanburg Counties for the excellent list of strategies proposed in their EAC Milestone Progress Report. Urge the three County Councils to take serious steps to implement these strategies, and tell them it’s time to “clear the air” in the Upstate!

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Greenville County Council Contact Information  
[http://www.greenvillecounty.org/County\\_Council/](http://www.greenvillecounty.org/County_Council/)

Spartanburg County Council Contact Information  
<http://www.spartanburgcounty.org/govt/depts/cc/index.htm>

### **3. Action Alert! House of Representatives Fails to Include Tax Incentives for Conservation, But There's Still Hope in the Conference Committee!**

Throughout the year we have been keeping you posted on efforts in Congress to improve the tax incentives for conservation easements and land protection. The incentives are included as part of the 2003 "CARE" legislation (the Charities Aid, Recovery, and Empowerment Act). The two most important measures are (1) to increase the amount of the deduction a landowner can take for donating land or an easement; and (2) to reduce the capital gains tax when land or an easement is sold to a land trust or government conservation agency. For more information, see Upstate Update No. 43, <http://www.upstateforever.org/UpstateUpdate43.pdf>.

Last April the Senate overwhelmingly approved these measures, but regrettably the House omitted them in the version of CARE it passed earlier this month.

But there's still hope because a House-Senate Conference Committee will soon consider and attempt to reconcile the two bills. The members of the Conference Committee are: Senators Charles Grassley (R-IA), Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Rick Santorum (R-PA), Max Baucus (D-MT), and John Rockefeller (D-WVA); Representatives Bill Thomas (R-CA), Charles Rangel (D-NY) and perhaps Roy Blunt (R-MO) and/or Jim McCrery (R-LA).

*You can help* by contacting these members and asking them to support the Senate bill. Contact information is available at <http://www.congress.org>.

For more information, see the Land Trust Alliance's website, [www.lta.org](http://www.lta.org).

#### **4. *The Wal-Mart Debate in Travelers Rest.***

"Big box developments" can have enormous impacts on communities. First, there is the impact to the site itself when many acres of land are graded and paved over. Then there are the impacts that extend beyond the site's boundary—the good "impacts" of an increased tax base and more jobs and the "bad impacts" of traffic, runoff, effects on adjoining neighbors, and the possible abandonment of the development.

All of these impacts have been the subject of an intense debate in Travelers Rest, where Wal-Mart wants to build a "Supercenter" within the city limits. The site the company has selected consists of three parcels, two of which are currently zoned residential and obviously would have to be rezoned to accommodate the store. The third and largest parcel, which fronts Highway 25, is already zoned commercial.

When this Upstate Update went to press, the Travelers Rest Planning Commission had voted 2-1 to reject the rezoning request. On October 23, the Travelers Rest City Council will consider the request and the Planning Commission's recommendation.

*Upstate Forever's* Director of Education and Advocacy, Diane Eldridge, attended the public hearing on the rezoning request and made the following statement:

"My name is Diane Eldridge and I am with Upstate Forever, a non-profit, membership-based organization promoting sensible growth and the protection of natural resources in the Upstate region of South Carolina.

"What is sensible growth? It is a way of accommodating the Upstate's incredible economic growth while making as little impact on the environment as possible. It is a way of growing that enhances our daily lives and ensures that our grandchildren will enjoy the same quality of life that we do.

"And that can be difficult. Every single day in the Upstate our population increases by about 40 people, and 33 acres of natural landscape are converted to some kind of development. Much of this growth is taking place right here in Travelers Rest and the surrounding area. In just the past 10 years, the population in the city of Travelers Rest has increased by 33.6 per cent!

"Our region is the envy of many parts of South Carolina where there is no growth

at all. In fact, in some places, the population is declining. Those areas would like to have the kind of growth that we are experiencing here in the Upstate.

“However, that does not mean that growth in every form is sensible growth. While many projects have boosted their local economies, enhanced neighborhoods, and provided opportunities for the community’s residents, others have had negative impacts on the surrounding community. Traffic patterns, noise levels, tree removal, loss of wildlife habitat, stormwater issues, and neighborhood impacts - these are some of the changes that concern communities the most.

“Sensible growth is finding ways to accommodate new development in our communities that minimize these impacts. Sensible growth is choosing HOW a community will grow. It is critical that the leadership in the Travelers Rest area put safeguards in place that will guide the growth that is sure to come in the way that this community wants it to see it develop.

“Some of those safeguards are already in place in Travelers Rest. You have a Comprehensive Plan that lays out your vision for future growth, and you have a zoning ordinance to help guide that growth. You have recently passed a landscaping standards ordinance for large parking lots and a light pollution ordinance. All of these are designed to guide growth in a manner that is compatible with the community. Tools like these are essential to a community that wants to grow in an orderly fashion. Without them, many regions have been surprised by the rapid changes that occur during periods of growth, many of which have been massive and far-reaching. Think of Atlanta. Or, closer to home, Woodruff Road.

“Upstate Forever has been asked by a number of citizens and members to become actively involved in opposing this rezoning. As an organization that strives to work in six counties but has limited staff and resources, we have to be extremely careful about what we take on. In general, our focus is on urging local governing bodies to establish broad policies and ordinances that will apply to all developments in the county or community. That is why I am before you tonight.

“We are not taking an official position on whether or not the parcels between Little Texas and State Park Roads should be rezoned to allow development of a “Big Box” retail establishment. However, we strongly urge the City, *if* you decide to grant the rezoning, to ensure that stringent design and development standards are in place *before* any building permits are issued. Such standards not only would serve the Travelers Rest area well but also could result in a model “big box” development for the entire Upstate.

“The handout you have received, which is also displayed on this board, shows that you do indeed have a choice. It shows what you will get with no design standards, and it shows what you can get with stringent standards. [We have posted this handout on our website, [www.upstateforever.org](http://www.upstateforever.org)--take a look!]

"We believe that there are two ways that the City could achieve this result. One is by rezoning the entire site as a "Planned Development District," and the other is to enter into a development agreement as authorized by the South Carolina Local Government Development Act.

"Under the Planned Development (PD) classification, the City will have far more latitude in setting standards for any development of the site than they would have if it were zoned Commercial. In the Travelers Rest Zoning Ordinance, the intent of a PD District is described this way:

*'The intent of planned development districts is to derive the benefits of efficiency, economy, and flexibility by encouraging unified development of large sites while also obtaining the advantages of creative site design, improved appearance, compatibility of uses, optimum service by community facilities, and better functioning of vehicular access and circulation...'*

"The other alternative, a development agreement, would provide the same latitude to the City to require that certain development standards be met as they would have under the Planned Development District.

"Upstate Forever strongly encourages a two-part approach. If the rezoning is approved, we urge you to implement stringent design requirements for development of the site either as a PD or under a development agreement. We also encourage the city to develop and adopt a new ordinance that will apply the same standards to all future large retail establishments built in the city. We hope that in doing so, Travelers Rest's ordinance will become a model for the Upstate, where numerous other communities are facing similar issues.

"Second, we recommend that the City develop a downtown revitalization plan for the Highway 276 area inside the city. Considering the city's proximity to Highway 11, new residential developments in northern Greenville County, and the mountainous region of the Upstate, we believe Travelers Rest can become a shopping and tourist destination similar to other small towns in the region like Hendersonville, Landrum, and Walhalla. Each of those cities has worked to improve their downtown districts by narrowing and beautifying their main streets and addressing walkability, design, and economic development. If the rezoning is granted, it will be even more important to undertake these efforts in order to reduce the impact of a big box development on downtown businesses.

"Now is the time to act. Growth is coming to Travelers Rest - it's up to the leaders in this room to make sure it is the kind of growth that YOU want and the kind of growth that you will still want in 10, 20, or 50 years."

## 5. *Upcoming Events.*

### *Upstate Forever Events*

**Haynie-Sirrine Neighborhood Cleanup** - October 18, Greenville. *Upstate Forever* is partnering with the Haynie-Sirrine Neighborhood Association, First Baptist Church, and the City of Greenville to help clean up the streets and streams in this urban neighborhood.

**South Carolina Low-Impact Development Conference** - October 22-23, Columbia. Developers, local governments, water resource professionals, land use planners, stormwater managers and many others are faced with tough water quality and quantity management decisions. Low-impact development combines a hydrologically functional site design with pollution prevention measures to compensate for land development impacts on hydrology and water quality. Co-sponsored by *Upstate Forever*. <http://www.sc.edu/sustainableu/LID1003Conf.htm>

**Upstate Forever's Annual Meeting** - November 8. Mark your calendars now and plan to join us at Spartanburg County's historic Walnut Grove Plantation. Lunch will be served. *For Upstate Forever members.*

**1957 - Diva Heaven!** - December 10. Please join us for *Upstate Forever's* annual fundraiser and enjoy a benefit performance of 1957 - Diva Heaven, a delightful musical stage show featuring a collage of music from 1957 at Centre Stage South Carolina in Greenville. A reception will precede the show and intermission will feature a short live auction of some very special items. Mark your calendar and plan to attend this wonderful event. Watch your mail and email for additional information, or call our office at (864) 250-0500.

### *Upstate Forever Field Trips*

**Exploring Nature in Spartanburg County** -Rescheduled for October 25. Guided tours of Peter's Creek Nature Preserve and Hatcher Gardens and Woodland Preserve. Dr. Gill Newberry of USC-Spartanburg will serve as our guide at Peter's Creek Preserve. Space is limited - call for reservations. Cost: \$20 per person. *For Upstate Forever Members.*

### *Other Events*

**"Working With Our Partners: Moving Forward Step-by-Step," South Carolina Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Conference** - October 26-28, Hyatt Hotel, Greenville, SC. Second annual statewide conference on improving bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. Presented by the S.C. Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration. Registration fee \$95.00. For more information or to download the agenda and a registration form, visit [http://www.scdot.org/Events/BikePed\\_default.html](http://www.scdot.org/Events/BikePed_default.html)

**Citizens in Action Forum** - October 23, Spartanburg Technical College. Sponsored by the Spartanburg Herald-Journal, this forum will discuss how citizens can be effective in shaping the communities in which they live. Upstate residents can participate in a discussion with leaders from the region who have been actively involved in community issues, include *Upstate Forever* Executive Director Brad Wyche. Joining Brad in a panel discussion will be Harold Mitchell, executive director of ReGenesis, a grass-roots effort to revitalize the south side of Spartanburg; Liz Patterson, who formerly represented the 4th Congressional District; Belva Howard, who pushed for change in the state's driving under the influence laws; Jay Bender, an attorney for the S.C. Press Association; and Kevin Gray, a community organizer and writer. The forum will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. in Tracy Gaines Auditorium. Admission is free, but seating will be on a first-come first-served basis.

**Brownfields 2003: Growing a Greener America** - October 27-29, Portland, Oregon. A national conference presented by the International City/County Management Association and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. <http://www.brownfields2003.org/index.aspx>

## 6. Lots o' Links.

**More Cars than Drivers!** The number of personal vehicles owned or available to U. S. households now outnumbers the number of licensed drivers! According to a new report from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics and the Federal Highway Administration, the average American household has 1.9 vehicles available for their use, but only 1.8 licensed drivers! Our love for the car has driven us to build our communities around them, and we are increasingly dependent on them as our sole method of transportation. According to the report, the average person in the U. S. takes four trips every day, nearly half of which are for errands or shopping. To read the entire report and to find specific information about South Carolina, visit: [http://www.bts.gov/publications/national\\_transportation\\_statistics/2002/](http://www.bts.gov/publications/national_transportation_statistics/2002/).

**Links for a Sustainable Future.** A long list of links that are all related to sustainability or design. <http://www.ecosainstitute.org/links.htm>

**Back on My Feet Again.** One man's humorous story about downsizing from two cars to one. <http://www.canada.com/search/story.aspx?id=91b02bfb-89db-4a1b-8953-61b6b48638d5>

**Top Fifty Planning and Development Websites from Planetizen.com** <http://www.planetizen.com/sites/#local>

**There's no such thing as a free road. Are more toll roads in our future?** <http://www.globeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20031002.berridge02/BNSStory/International/?query=No+free+road>

**Boomers Embrace All-Ages, Active Lifestyles.**

<http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/news/articles/1004activeadults04.html>

**Taking The Green Exterior Beyond Energy.** An integrated planning process is the key to a green envelope.

<http://www.facilitiesnet.com/bom/Sep03/Sep03environment.shtml>

**Is Wal-Mart Too Powerful?** Low prices are great. But according to this report in *Business Week*, Wal-Mart's dominance creates problems – for suppliers, workers, communities, and even American culture.

[http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/03\\_40/b3852001\\_mz001.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/03_40/b3852001_mz001.htm)

**Growth and Girth: Congress weighs sprawl-induced fat problem.** Super-sized American waistlines, say an increasing number of public health officials, appear to be caused, at least in part, by superhighways and cars, massive parking lots with no sidewalks in sight, and all the other artifacts of America's sprawl-dominant, vehicle-dependent lifestyle. U.S. Representative James Oberstar of Minnesota introduced a proposal in June that would dedicate millions of dollars in federal transportation spending to making it safe and convenient to walk and bicycle. <http://www.mlui.org/growthmanagement/fullarticle.asp?fileid=16523>

**7. Quote of the Month.**

"I think we need to take care of the health of our future generations."

Rock Adams, Spartanburg County Council member who opposes the proposed new landfill  
Spartanburg Herald-Journal, September 6, 2003