GSA BUSINESS
THE BUSINESS JOURNAL FOR GREENVILLE, SPARTANBURG & ANDERSON

July 6 - July 19, 2009

Atlanta Chamber urges Upstate S.C. to back high-speed rail funds

The Obama administration appears willing to spend some of the $8 billion set aside for high-speed rail development on planning in corridors not yet ready to build the rail lines, an Atlanta-based advocate told Greenville leaders recently.

Chuck Meadows, vice president of transportation for the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, told the transportation and infrastructure committee of the Greater Greenville Chamber of Commerce that the stimulus funding is a great opportunity for leaders in the Charlotte-to-Atlanta corridor to jumpstart their hopes for high-speed rail service in the Interstate 85 corridor.

Gaye Sprague, who chaired the June 18 meeting, said the Greenville Chamber must decide whether to make a financial commitment to participate in an advocacy campaign through the Southeastern Economic Alliance. That's a grouping of Chambers of Commerce along the federally designated route that was formed expressly to advocate building the high-speed line that would pass through the Upstate region of South Carolina.

Virginia and North Carolina are well ahead of South Carolina and Georgia in planning and operating passenger rail systems. But Meadows told the Greenville leaders that the stimulus funding is an opportunity to get planning money that might not otherwise be available.

Meadows said high-speed rail has great economic development potential.