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New home construction sputters

Residential building permits down in Anderson, Oconee and Pickens

BY CARLOS GALARZA
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SENECA — New home construction continues to sputter in the tri-county area, a first quarter 2010 residential building permit report shows.

Permits pulled in Anderson, Oconee and Pickens counties were down double digits during the first three months of 2010 compared to the same period a year ago.

The trend underscores the impact the weak economy is having on new home construction.

High unemployment, tight lending by banks and a glut of foreclosed properties in the market are making it tough going for homebuilders in the tri-county area.

The permitting report is compiled quarterly by The Market Edge for much of the Southeast region.

Market Edge founder Dale Atkins said the report was positive for most of the markets reviewed.

"We're off to a better start," Atkins said.

Unfortunately, the good news did not include the tri-county area.

The news was the worst in Pickens, which had a total of 45 residential permits on file in Q1 2010, compared to 54 in Oconee and 82 in Anderson.



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New homes are going up off Perkins Creed Road near Seneca. Despite the activity, the latest residential building permit trend report shows new home construction remains spotty in the area.

UPSTATE RESIDENTIAL PERMITS

County	Q1 2010	Q1 2009	Percent change
Anderson	83	94	-11.7%
Oconee	54	66	-18.2%
Pickens	45	82	-45.1%

Permits in Pickens plummeted 45.1 percent from the 82 compiled in Q1 2009. Furthermore permits in Pickens dropped 40 percent from the 75 recorded during the previous Q4 2009 period of October through December.

By comparison, Oconee's 54 permits in Q1 2010 was 18.2 percent less than at the same time a year ago and is up almost 6 percent from the 51 permits recorded in Q4 2009.

Anderson's 83 permits in Q1 2010 was down only 11.7 percent from the 94 in Q1 2009 and up almost 14 percent from the 73 in the previous Q4 2009 period.

Not all news was bad in the Upstate. Greenville County recorded a 51.5 percent increase from Q1 2009.

carlos@dailyjm.com | (864) 973-6685