

Oconee, Pickens part

Goal of six-month target project is to effectively market

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GREENVILLE — Upstate Alliance consultants will visit Oconee and Pickens counties in the coming weeks to gather data as part of a target study to effectively market the region for new business once the economy turns around, officials said Monday.

The six-month study is a joint effort of Upstate Alliance, South Carolina Power Team and Advance SC,

which are paying for the project estimated to cost more than \$100,000.

During the project's first phase, national consultants Avalanche Consulting Inc., McCallum Sweeney Consulting and Greyhill Advisors will conduct in-depth assessments of the 10-county Upstate region, its industry base, strengths and challenges.

Consultants will be in Pickens on May 28 and in Oconee on June 3, said

Upstate Alliance spokesman Richard K. Blackwell. He said the consultants would conduct meetings in each county for at least one day to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each county.

Combined with data collected on existing industry within the region and changes in the global economy, the information culled from each county should provide answers on how the Upstate community could be targeted for recruiting new business,

Blackwell said.

In the second phase of the study, the consulting team will craft specific marketing strategies for each target industry cluster, which would give the Upstate region a clearer focus for its upcoming economic development initiatives, officials said.

Amy Holloway, president of Avalanche Consulting, said that taking time to strategize during the present economic downturn would pay off in the long term.

Upstate Alliance Chairman

of new study

10-county region for new business

Leon Patterson said he's looking forward to the valuable information the study will yield.

"By partnering with the best consultants in the business, we're confident that we can position our region for long-term prosperity and continued economic growth," Patterson said.

Hal Johnson, president and CEO of Upstate Alliance, said the target study is being launched after a successful 2008 when the organization's economic development efforts

brought the region more than \$2 billion in capital investment and more than 6,000 new jobs.

"This target industry study will lay the groundwork for years of focused economic development initiatives for our region," Johnson said.

The Upstate Alliance is footing 42 percent of the study's cost, while Advance SC is contributing 37 percent and the SC Power Team is kicking in with 21 percent, Blackwell said.