

Oconee may get 'Reality Check'

Group hopes counties join program to plan for growth

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WALHALLA — Upstate Alliance's chief executive officer gave members of Oconee County Council a few good reasons why they should be thinking regionally to plan for future growth.

Hal Johnson said Thursday that during the next 22 years, 203,000 jobs would be added to the Upstate region, attracting 235,000 new residents and adding 118,000 new households in need of services.

Johnson said the best way to plan for growth is to do so collectively and not with each of the

10 counties in the Upstate trying to do its own thing.

The Upstate Alliance CEO invited Oconee to participate in Reality Check, an attempt to get all 10 counties to collaborate in a 2030 visioning process to manage the opportunities and challenges of growth.

Johnson said Reality Check, a joint effort between Upstate Alliance, the Urban Land Institute of South Carolina and Upstate Together, is attempting to recruit 40 people from each of the 10 counties for an all-day brainstorming session April 8 at Carolina First Center in Greenville.

Reality Check was created by the Urban Land Institute and has been used by metropolitan areas throughout the United States to engage stakeholders in a regional dialogue on growth issues. ULI South Carolina has committed to Reality Check efforts throughout the state.

Johnson said he is asking for a \$1,000 commitment from each county to be in the game.

Oconee County Chairman Reg Dexter said the council likely would be inclined to join program.

Councilman Joel Thrift said regional cooperation is the way of the future to mitigate infrastructure costs that would only continue to shoot up.

For more information, visit <http://www.upstaterealitycheck.com>.