LOCAL NEWS

Pickens County, Upstate still growing

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Greenville County led the state in population growth between 2007 and 2008, adding more than 10,000 new residents from the middle of one year to the next, according to U.S. Census figures released today.

Other Upstate counties continued to grow as well, with Pickens County adding 1,309 people, Anderson 2,861, Oconee 614 and Spartanburg 5,453.

Laurens County grew by 148, and that was more than 19 of the state's 46 counties, including 13 that lost population, mostly in the Pee Dee and Lowcountry.

Greenville County's population growth figure — 10,691 — was down slightly from the previous year's growth of 11,734, but it continues a trend that has seen the county's population increase by 15.4 percent since the 2000 Census.

"The good news is that we're still growing," said Brooke Ferguson, who tracks demographic changes for the Greenville County Planning Commission. "The economy hasn't really put a stranglehold on everything that's going on economic development-wise."

Most of the growth in Greenville County over the past year has been in an area south of U.S. 29 and east of U.S. 276 and Interstate 385, she said.

POPULATION CHANGE PER COUNTY

County	2008	2007	2000	% change 2000-08
Greenville	438,119	427,428	379,612	15.4%
Spartanburg	280,738	275,285	253,782	10.6%
Anderson	182,825	179,964	165,738	10.3%
Pickens	116,915	115,606	110,757	5.6%
Oconee	71,274	70,660	66,215	7.6%
Greenwood	68,549	68,173	66,272	3.4%
Laurens	69,681	69,533	69,553	0.2%

POPULATION CHANGE PER MSA

MSA	2008	2007	2000	% change 2000-08
Gville-Mauldin-Easley	624,715	612,567	559,922	11.6%
Spartanburg	280,738	275,285	253,782	10.6%
Anderson	182,825	179,964	165,738	10.3%
Seneca	71,274	70,660	66,215	7.6%
Greenwood	68,549	68,173	66,272	3.4%

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau SUZIE RIDDLE / Staff

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■ For databases showing county and municipal growth nationwide, go to greenvilleonline.com

Greenville County's growth was largely due to influx, which accounted for all but 2,638 of the new residents, factoring in births and deaths.

Greenville County is the state's most populous county, with about 438,000 residents.

In terms of percentage growth, Greenville County trailed the coastal area counties of Berkeley, Horry and Dorchester and the Charlotte suburban counties of York and Lancaster. York led the state with a 4.3 percent growth rate for the year and 32.1 percent growth since 2000.

The report is the first since the federal Office of Management and Budget divided what was the Greenville-Spartanburg Metropolitan Statistical Area in two.

Greenville, Pickens and Laurens counties now comprise the Greenville-Mauldin-Easley MSA, separate from the Spartanburg MSA. The new designation also includes a Seneca Micropolitan Statistical Area, which encompasses all of Oconee County.

A Nov. 20, 2007, memo from the Office of Management and Budget to the heads of federal departments notes that the MSAs are to be used solely "for statistical purposes."

"They may or may not be suitable for use in program funding formulas," the memo says.