Pickens, Oconee pace

Housing units spike more than 25 percent in Pickens and more than 17 percent in Oconee

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SENECA — Oconee and Pickens counties are growing at a faster rate than other areas in the Upstate, U.S. Census statistics on the estimated number of housing units both counties added this decade indicate.

Pickens County paced the entire Upstate with a 25.5 percent growth in housing units since 2000.

Pickens' total number of housing units jumped from 46,000 at the beginning of the decade to 51,479 in 2008.

Although people continue to pour into Oconee County, it is at a slower rate than the blistering 24.6 percent pace recorded during the 1990s.

Oconee had 32,383 housing units in 2000. That number spiked 17.3 percent to 38,000 in 2008. In close pursuit were Greenville (up 16.7 percent) and Spartanburg (14.1 percent). Anderson County (13.7) was the only other Upstate area to register double-digit growth in housing units.

Pickens and Oconee surpassed the statewide average of 17.2 percent growth in housing units.

Only two counties in South Carolina — Horry and Beaufort

Upstate growth

— made the U.S. Census list of the 100 fastest-growing counties.

Horry County added 50,738 housing units since 2000, an increase of 41.6 percent, and came in at No. 51.

Beaufort placed 66 on the list after adding 22,850 housing units since 2000, or an increase of 37.8 percent.

Georgia dominated the list with eight counties among the top-20 fastest growing, including Paulding (4), Forsyth (6) Henry (7) Newton (11), Cherokee (13), Barrow 15), Jackson (19) and Fannin (20).

The annual estimates of housing units for states and counties comes in advance of the 2010 Census. Every household in the country will be mailed a short-form questionnaire in January to be filled out and returned to the U.S. Census Bureau. In April, Census workers will go door to door to get vital information from household that do not mail back the questionnaire.