

LOCAL NEWS

Pickens 'Vision' in

By Julie Howle

PICKENS COUNTY NEWS
jhowle@greenvillenews.com

A recreation plan for Easley, construction of new schools and a domestic violence shelter are a few of the projects currently taking shape, county officials said, as Pickens County's "Vision 2025" plan enters its second year.

The plan was presented in September 2007, and an implementation team was created last January, said

Jerry Sweitzer, chairman for Pickens County Vision 2025.

"We've got to bring people together and ask them to take ownership and responsibility, to collaborate with others, cooperate and work together in implementing what the citizens have voiced and said they want to see happen," Sweitzer said.

He said almost 90 objectives in the plan fall into five themes: a planned

community; a working community; a healthy, safe community; a sense of place; and an educated community.

The plan was created through town hall meetings, focus groups and individual interviews, he said.

Tiffany Martin, who is on the implementation team and is co-chair of the healthy, safe community focus group, said Vision 2025 is a great way to help organizations work together

to reach goals.

Sweitzer said some things happening in the community that were identified as goals in the plan include a recreation master plan taking shape in Easley, the construction of new schools, and Mary's House, a domestic violence shelter that opened last year in the county.

"We're working behind the scenes, but we don't necessarily say look what Vision 2025 did," he said.

second year

He said other efforts include conversations with Clemson University officials to further equestrian interests in Pickens County, something Sweitzer said will attract tourists.

Also in the works is a center to provide consulting and support services to help new businesses, which will create jobs, he said.

"It's a way that in many states small businesses are being nurtured and encouraged," Sweitzer said.

A three-year funding campaign started in November with a goal of raising \$375,000 for Vision 2025, he said. That would fund three years of operation, including paying for an executive director.

"We're aware that the economy is not going to be very conducive to this," he said. "We'll just stretch it out if we need to for a longer period of time, but the initial response has been positive."