

Population on uptake in Upstate

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WALHALLA — Oconee County's population is pushing 71,000 and growing at a rate of 6.5 percent since the 2000 census, a recently released 2007 U.S. Census Bureau estimate shows.

Neighboring Pickens County eclipsed the 116,000 mark and is growing at a 4.4 percent rate according to the same estimate.

In July 2000, Oconee's population stood at 66,416, while Pickens had 111,089 inhabitants.

The numbers are included in the U.S. Census Bureau's 2005-2007 American Community Survey three-year estimates for cities, counties and other areas with populations of 20,000 or more. The survey was released last week and offers the first statistical portrait since the 2000 census on a wide range of key socioeconomic and housing topics.

Greenville County is ranked first in population statewide with 428,243. The Upstate is

represented with six counties among the top 20 counties with the highest population, including Pickens (14th) and Oconee (18th).

The other counties are fourth-ranked Spartanburg (275,534), eighth-ranked Anderson (179,981), 19th-ranked Laurens (69,582) and 20th-ranked Greenwood (68,259).

The 10-county Upstate area had a combined population of 1.3 million as of July 2007.

Tabulated just a few months before economists said the United States slipped into a recession, the data shows Oconee's median household income was \$40,933. Per capita income was \$23,147.

However, 9.5 percent of all Oconee families and 13.3 percent of individuals had income below the poverty level.

In Pickens County, the median household income in July 2007 was \$42,027 and per capita income was \$20,090. Also, 8.6 percent of families and 14.1 percent of individuals had income below the poverty level.

From 2005-2007, Pickens County contained 44,000 households, and their average size was 2.4 people. Families made up 69 percent of the households in Pickens.

During the same period, Oconee contained 29,000 households, and the average size was also 2.4 people. Families made up 68 percent of households in Oconee.