Survey: Most Oconee, Pickens residents love Upstate

BY CARLOS GALARZA
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SENECA — Most Oconee and Pickens County residents love to call the Upstate their home and "strongly support" more extensive planning and land-use regulation to keep the region a great place to live.

Those are among the preliminary findings of the Shared Upstate Growth Vision survey undertaken by Ten at the Top, a nonprofit organization created to advance collaboration and cooperation in the Upstate.

Ten at the Top grew out of last year's Reality Check summit in which stakeholders from the 10-county region, including Oconee and Pickens, brainstormed how the Upstate could absorb projected growth of more than 200,000 new residents and jobs over the next two decades.

Kathleen Brady, director of the Metropolitan Center at USC-Upstate, said the Vision and Values Committee she heads went over the final survey results this week.



Hybl

Brady said 6,027 responses to the survey were submitted, which more than surpassed the response rate required for a statistically representative sample.

Organizers shared the following preliminary findings:

- 85 percent of respondents from Oconee and 74 percent from Pickens rated the Upstate as a "Very Good" or "Excellent" place to live;
- Most respondents from both counties have noticed an increase in traffic and are concerned that it will get worse;
- Respondents thought that air and water quality was the most important consideration when building new housing developments;
- Most residents "strongly support" more extensive planning and land-use regulation; and
- Respondents thought that job creation was the most important priority to ensure quality of life in the Upstate is maintained.

The survey results and initial vision statement will be unveiled during a Regional Collaboration Summit on Sept. 28 at the Carolina First Center.

Dean Hybl, the executive director of Ten at the Top, said organizers were "very pleased" with the excellent response to the survey.

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