Upstate Alliance is keeping 'score'

GUEST COLUMN



Hal Johnson is the president and chief executive officer of the Upstate SC Alliance, a nonprofit organization made up of a public and private investors aimed at promoting economic growth. For more information go to www.upstateSCalliance.com.

The Upstate SC Alliance is proud to market this 10-county region against any part of the world.

The results are we frequently see announcements that a new company is moving to the Upstate, or an existing company is expanding its operations by building an addition onto its plant and hiring new workers. A lot of times Upstate SC Alliance marketing efforts exposed these companies to the area.

But other growing areas around the world see similar announcements every day. How do we know if we are competing well and winning a good share of the business expansions taking place in the world, or the Southeast for that matter? Also, how do we know what industry sectors are growing? Are those industries represented in the announcements we see for the Upstate?

There are industry trade publications and local intelligence gathering that answers these questions, but there has been no simple, easy-to-understand snapshot that provides a context for showing us how the announcement of new projects in the Upstate compares with others areas in the Southeast, the U.S. or the world.

Well now there is.

The Upstate SC Alliance has created THE SCORE. This report is the brainchild of our research manager, Elizabeth Feather. This report will give us a quarterly snapshot of major projects announced worldwide. It will help us see just how well the Upstate is attracting new capital investment and creating new jobs. It is arranged in a format that is easy to read quickly — like a score card. This inaugural issue covers the third quarter of 2012.

THE SCORE is divided into four sections. The first section is a short summary of overall business development activity for the Upstate SC Alliance, and a statement about market forces shaping general business conditions. The second section provides a quick summary of total announced capital investment and jobs announcements for the world, the United States, the Southeast and the Upstate. It also gives the top three industries and the top three projects announced in each region.

The third section lists worldwide activity in the five target industries on which the Upstate SC Alliance is focused: Aerospace, Automotive, BioScience, Energy and Advanced Materials. The fourth section is a running listing of recent business climate rankings and recognitions for South Carolina.

THE SCORE is deceptively simple. Over time this report aims to help us see how competitive the Upstate is regionally, nationally and globally. It is significant that our 10-county region can even be measured on these scales. The fact that we had 6.5 percent of the announced capital investment, 6 percent of the projects and 5 percent of the jobs in the Southeast is significant. One might expect these ratios for a state rather than a 10-county region. To see THE SCORE, go to www.upstateSCalliance.com and click on "Data Center" on the left of the screen. At the bottom of the next screen in the middle under "Reports" click on "Q3 Economic Scorecard."

This way of presenting our case more closely reflects the way our local economy truly operates. In this regard THE SCORE demonstrates a core strength and key message of the Upstate SC Alliance. It is a message that I enjoy repeating over and over. The larger point THE SCORE demonstrates is how much more competitive we are when we market ourselves as one region. This message will not change in any quarterly report.