



Fostering Regional Collaboration in South Carolina's Upstate

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Ten at the Top Unveils Strategy For Creating a Shared Upstate Vision

Public Survey Will Ask Residents "What Matters Most" as Region Grows

Upstate, SC [March 23, 2010] – The regional collaboration and planning organization *Ten at the Top* (TATT) today announced a four step, year-long initiative to create a Shared Vision and Implementation Strategy for South Carolina's Upstate (known as the *Shared Upstate Vision*) that will be based on input from area residents, community leaders and elected officials.

According to projections based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Upstate of South Carolina (comprised of Abbeville, Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg and Union counties) will add roughly 234,000 residents and 200,000 new jobs to the region over the next 20 years. Pending the final results from the 2010 Census, it means the 10-county region could have a population near 1.6 million with nearly a million jobs by 2030.

"We are very fortunate to be a region that is anticipated to continue growing and increasing our economic vitality," said Irv Welling, the Chair Emeritus of Elliott Davis and the Chair of *Ten at the Top*. "However, with that growth comes a responsibility to ensure that we maintain and increase the quality of life for the next generation.

"Creating a regional vision will help illustrate what people of the region value and what leaders and elected officials need to be looking at as we plan for the future."

TATT has developed a four step process that combines community input with engagement from community leaders and elected officials from across the region. Below are the steps and project timeline:

Step 1: Community Education and Input – February-May 2010

Step 2: Refining the Vision – June-August 2010

Step 3: Unveiling the Vision/Creating the Implementation Strategy – September-December 2010

Step 4: Publishing of Implementation Strategy – January-March 2011

Presentations and meetings with community leaders and elected officials have been ongoing since the *Ten at the Top* Board of Directors approved the strategy in February 2010.

The public portion of the campaign will begin with a 'Public Input Survey' that will be available for residents to complete between May 10 and 31. In this survey, which will be available both over the internet and in printed form, residents will answer a series of questions dealing with the issues of growth, land use, economic vitality, natural and cultural resources, education, and quality of life.

The land use questions will build on the information collected in April 2009 during the 'Upstate Reality Check', which was coordinated by *Ten at the Top* and engaged more than 400 leaders from across the region in a day-long exercise to look at future growth within the region.

That exercise identified four potential patterns for future on-the-ground growth in the region:

Dispersed Growth Development: Reflecting current growth trends, this scenario places less development in existing city centers; adds growth throughout the region; separates jobs from residential areas; and increases dependence on roads and automobiles.

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Corridor Development: Placing development along existing and projected roads and transit corridors, especially near transit stops, this scenario provides a mix of jobs and housing.

Center Development: Concentrating new growth primarily in existing city centers; this scenario mixes housing and jobs while also conserving open space and rural lands.

Village Development: Supporting development in small towns as well as larger cities, this scenario provides goods and services on downtown main streets, combines households and jobs in town centers and preserves rural character.

The Appalachian Council of Governments and the Metropolitan Studies Institute at USC-Upstate are developing questions for the survey with input from the *Ten at the Top* Vision and Values committee. The Metropolitan Studies Institute will also monitor the results to ensure statistical validity and sufficient representation across the entire region.

“Because it is important to ensure that all residents of the region are represented appropriately, we will identify the number of respondents we need from each county to constitute a representative sample and take measures to make sure that we obtain enough responses,” said Dr. Kathleen Brady, Director of the Metropolitan Center at USC-Upstate. “We will distribute the survey as widely as possible and if necessary will reach out to residents in some counties by the telephone to ensure that we get a wide understanding of what matters to the residents of our region.”

Following the community survey period, the TATT Vision and Values Committee, which is being chaired by Dr. John Stockwell, Chancellor of USC-Upstate, and includes representatives from a wide array of stakeholder groups across the entire region, will review the survey results and develop the elements of the regional vision.

“The *Shared Upstate Vision* will help identify the issues of regional scale and significance that can be addressed from a broader perspective than only at the city and county levels,” said Dean Hybl, Executive Director of *Ten at the Top*. “It also will provide a roadmap to give regional organizations and elected officials an understanding of what elements of our future growth matter to residents.”

The *Shared Upstate Vision* will be unveiled during a Regional Summit in September 2010. For the Regional Vision to be successful, it will take community buy-in and an implementation strategy. At the Upstate Regional Summit and then in the following weeks at Community Forums held in each of the ten counties in the region, participants will be asked to provide input on how to ensure public support and how the *Shared Upstate Vision* can be implemented in an effective and efficient manner.

“Many people have the mistaken idea that regional planning is about creating a large homogeneous, generic megapolitan area, when in fact the goal of successful regional planning is quite the opposite,” said Rick Danner, Mayor of the City of Greer and a *Ten at the Top* Executive Committee Member. “The mission of *Ten at the Top* as I see it is to recognize, identify and plan for changes that will affect the Upstate region and then proactively inform and educate our citizens so that they can make informed decisions about the future of the region.

“My vision for the Upstate, with the help and direction of TATT, is to help preserve those things we hold dear, sense of community, the environment and robust economy within the framework of a well planned growing and changing region.”

An implementation strategy for the *Shared Upstate Vision* will be finalized during the first quarter of 2011 and one goal for TATT during the remainder of 2011 will be to present the vision and implementation strategy to all city and county governments in the region as well as to businesses and community organizations across the Upstate.

About Ten at the Top

Comprised of public, private and civic leaders across the ten-county Upstate South Carolina Region, *Ten at the Top* was created to build regional trust and consensus through data-driven research and regular convening of leaders and citizens to address key issues facing the region. *Ten at the Top* works with regional partners to encourage quality growth and enhance the economic vitality, natural and cultural resources and quality of life for Upstate residents both today and as the region continues to grow.

www.tenatthetop.org.

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