

Shifting Upstate Economy

Newspaper headlines so far this year tell the story of the many textile industry layoffs and closings in Upstate South Carolina. They are indicative of a definite shift in the economy, not only a shift within the manufacturing sector, but also the economy's shift from manufacturing to other sectors.

Research shows that there were 25% fewer textile mills in the Upstate in 2000 than in 1995. In addition, 30% fewer people were employed by textile mills in 2000 than in 1995. These figures do not include the closings of eight additional textile mills in the ACOG region since the beginning of 2001, which have resulted in the layoff of over 4,000 employees. The slowing of the textile industry in the Upstate is just one indication of the region's shifting economy. Balanced against the decrease in textile-related jobs, however, other areas of the manufacturing sector have shown an increase in employment.

According to First Union's *Summer 2001 Regional Economic Review*, "Even with these setbacks, the region's economy is still holding up reasonably well. Expansions at GE PowerSystems, in Greenville, and BMW, in Spartanburg, continue to generate new jobs and attract suppliers and new residents to the region." The announcement by General Electric of their \$2 billion contract to build 24 gas turbines has spurred a tremendous amount of growth in the region in that sector alone. Since the announcement by General Electric, at



least four companies have announced their own plans to move into the area to provide support. In addition, according to First Union, "International ties continue to play a huge role in the Upstate and have helped mitigate the slowdown in the domestic economy."

Overall though, manufacturing as a proportion of the Upstate's economy has been decreasing as well. In 1995 there were 2,047 manufacturing plants in the region, employing over 200,000 workers. In 2000 there were 1,358 plants, employing just over 140,000. In 1995, 30% of the Upstate's workforce was employed in manufacturing. By 1999 that figure was down to 26%. During the same period of time, the proportion of jobs in the manufacturing sector decreased in all six of the region's counties.

Conversely, other sectors of the Upstate's economy have grown considerably. For example, from 1995 to 1999 the service sector grew from 20% to 23% of the workforce, with the addition of almost 18,000 new jobs. Details concerning economic development activities in the ACOG region are detailed in the Information Services publication,

What Happens When A Company Closes Its Doors?

During the recent downturn in the economy, Upstate companies have continued to permanently close or lay off large numbers of employees. The Workforce Investment Act's employment and training system is designed to reach out to those dislocated workers and help them return to work as quickly as possible.

When a permanent layoff or closure affects 50 or more employees, the company must file a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) with the S. C. Employment Security Commission's Dislocated Worker Unit (DWU). In most cases, a Rapid Response Team is assembled to go on site to provide information on the services available to the affected employees. This assistance is a collaborative effort involving representatives of the S. C. Employment Security Commission and the local Workforce Investment Board.

Rapid Response activities begin by having an initial meeting with the company management staff. Information, such as the services offered through the Job Service office, the process for applying for unemployment insurance, and reemployment services and occupational retraining available through the local Workforce Investment Board will be shared during this initial meeting. During this meeting, a schedule is set whereby the same information will be shared with the affected workers on site before the first layoff is expected to

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DHEC Begins Nonpoint Pollutant Education Efforts in Region

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) will be initiating the Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) Project in the Seneca Watershed this fall. The NEMO project focuses on helping local decision makers understand nonpoint source water pollution, or polluted runoff. The project is based on the idea that reduction of polluted runoff can only be achieved through informed local decisions at the local level. In addition, the proliferation of new federal and state “nonpoint” laws and programs has underscored the growing need for local officials to be knowledgeable about the causes, effects and management of polluted runoff.

The ultimate goal will be to develop a process for educating professional and volunteer municipal officials about the impacts of land use on water quality and about the options available for managing those impacts. The NEMO project will make use of geographic information systems (GIS) technology to help illustrate the connection between land use and water quality. The first will use GIS images of topography to emphasize the water cycle and need for watershed management. Second, it will examine land use/land cover data that show local officials the polluted runoff problems associated with current land use patterns. Finally, the program looks at “build-out” scenarios based on zoning regulations that give an idea of the potential increased nonpoint source runoff and pollution.

The Seneca Watershed initiative is one of four watershed projects in South Carolina whose objective is to devise a useful and workable way to assist municipalities in dealing with polluted runoff in their community. The project is being done through the combined efforts of the S. C. Sea Grant Extension Program, the Clemson University Extension Service, the University of South Carolina and DHEC. Their efforts will



be based on the experience of a pilot project to establish a NEMO program already conducted in the Waccamaw region. The project is being funded through the U. S. EPA and DHEC’s Section 319 Fund. For more information, contact Chip Bentley of the Appalachian Council of Governments, who will be participating in the initia-

DHHS to Implement Plastic Medicaid Cards

In South Carolina eligible recipients receive a paper Medicaid card in the mail each month that some say resembles a water bill. Producing and mailing over 400,000 of these cards per month is quite expensive. Additionally, there is a certain stigma attached with handing a provider a “water bill” looking card when other patients have nice plastic cards for their insurance coverage. With these and other factors in mind, Executive Staff has approved the development of plastic Medicaid cards.

The current plan is to convert to the plastic card by late 2001. The card design is being finalized and procurement issues are being addressed. Several changes will be noticed. Each eligible recipient will receive a card rather than one card per family. The card will have a magnetic stripe on the back for use in Point of Sale (POS) devices just like a credit card. It will not contain eligibility dates since the recipient will keep this card as they move in and out of eligibility.

Since eligibility information will not appear on the card, we will also implement several new options for verifying eligibility. The agency is currently procuring an Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) that will enable providers to dial a toll-free number to verify eligibility.

This will be an automated response and will be a free service to the provider. Providers will also have the option to contract with one of three eligibility vendors that are currently providing eligibility verification services for South Carolina Medicaid.

These vendors offer options to verify eligibility by swiping the card through a POS device, through the Internet, or through software installed in the providers’ computers and connected to vendors’ systems.

From these queries, the provider will learn if the recipient is eligible for Medicaid on the date of service, if the recipient is in a waiver or special program, if the recipient has other insurance coverage (TPL) and information regarding visit counts such as Home Health visits met for the year.

This information will be current and will be provided through the Medicaid Eligibility Verification System (MEVS) housed at Clemson. The MEVS gets its data directly from the MMIS.

In-house committees are working to develop training materials and plans for providers, recipients and agency staff. Although there will be a learning curve for all involved with Medicaid, the benefits of moving to plastic cards will be well worth the effort.

The agency will save money by producing the plastic cards, providers will have current information on the recipients’ Medicaid eligibility status, and recipients can avoid the stigma often associated with the current paper Medicaid card. Expect to hear more on the subject of plastic Medicaid cards and eligibility verification in the next

Long Term Care Ombudsmen Advocate for Residents' Rights

CORNERSTONE OF CARE: Residents' Rights

Why are there Residents' Rights?

The Nursing Home Reform law and many state laws contain specific provisions that protect residents' rights — the basic human and civil liberties that most of us take for granted every day. For example: the right to visit with anyone you choose, or the right to get up and go to bed when you wish. Who wouldn't expect to make such decisions? You don't lose any rights when you move into a nursing home.



But nursing home staff tend to focus on routine and efficiency. They must care for large numbers of frail, dependent people. Respect for the rights of individual residents sometimes gets lost in the drive to operate efficiently as a business.

The nursing home is an institution, with institutional bureaucracy and management. Residents are physically frail and often mentally confused. These factors help explain why the law places so much emphasis on residents' rights.

Residents' rights are one of the key items state survey agencies must inspect during their reviews of nursing homes, and many states have their own strict laws and regulations to protect individual rights.

Residents and their families generally receive a copy of a nursing home's policy on residents' rights upon admission. This important document can help residents receive the best possible care. It's a good idea for both residents

and family members to reread it from time to time. Be sure the nursing home's policy does not violate your rights.*

Who to Contact ???

Call the Appalachian Council of Governments' Long Term Care Ombudsmen toll free:

Anderson County	225-3268
Cherokee County	489-6960
Greenville County	242-9733
Oconee County	882-7538
Pickens County	855-0163
Spartanburg County	582-1403

*Sarah Greene Burger...[et al.] and the National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform (1998) Nursing Homes:

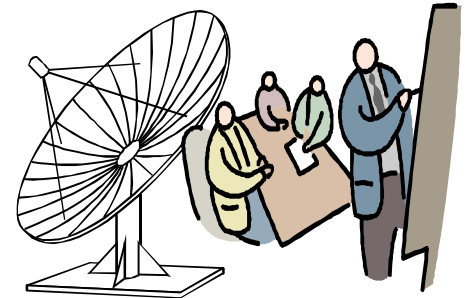
(Workforce continued from page 1) occur.

Recently, the Pendleton District Workforce Investment Board staff has participated in Rapid Response meetings with Mayfair Mills in Pickens and Easley, affecting 260 and 350 employees, respectively; Gerber Childrenswear in Pelzer, affecting 130 employees; and, Isola Laminate Systems, affecting 176 employees. Staff explained to the affected employees how to access the reemployment and retraining services through the One-Stop Centers located in the three area Employment Security Commission offices and on the campus of Tri-County Technical College. In the three counties served by the Pendleton District Workforce Investment Board, a total of 1928 employees have been affected by mass layoffs or closures since January of this year.

For more information on the Rapid Response activities, visit the S. C. Employment Security Commission's website at www.sces.org. Get

Municipal Government Training

Via Satellite or Face to Face



Upstate municipal officials will have another opportunity to receive some quality local government training without having to travel to Columbia. On September 6, ACOG will facilitate another in a series of special training sessions conducted by the South Carolina Municipal Association (MASC). September's session will include **"Benefits and Pitfalls of Economic Development"** and **"The Forms of Municipal Government."** Participants will be able to earn credits toward the Elected Officials Institute certification.

Satellite classes provide an opportunity to train locally alongside other appointed and elected officials. MASC's program is offered quarterly, addressing home rule, economic development, Freedom of Information, and an assortment of practical municipal challenges. **ACOG also offers training in computers, basic supervisory skills, customer service, labor issues, risk management, organizational development and a number of other local government areas.**

For information concerning MASC broadcasts and basic supervisory training, contact Debra Brown at ACOG. For organizational development or general training issues, contact Donna Kazia. For computer, business license or risk management training,

State's Elderly to Benefit From New Center

MUSC, others to educate public on graying population



The new South Carolina Geriatric Education Center will work to improve life for the state's older residents. About 56 percent of the state's population is older than 50.

Until now, the state's elderly network has been fragmented, said Dr. Esther Forti, an assistant professor at the Medical University of South Carolina and director of the center.

Forti said there is a great need in South Carolina, which ranks eighth in population growth of people 65 and older, and seventh in proportion of elders living in poverty.

As the population ages, there will be a tremendous need for people to care for them, Forti said. Home health care, assisted living, nursing homes, hospitals, rehabilitation centers and other services will require more staff, but studies show today's workers aren't adequately trained in geriatrics, she said.

A five-year federal grant to MUSC will establish the statewide center. Four other educational institutions will collaborate, and more than 50 communities and state organizations will take part.

One collaborator, the South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium, plans to introduce high school students to health careers involving the elderly. The University of South Car-

olina and Coastal Carolina University will develop Internet-based geriatric courses.

The center also will take geriatric workshops to rural doctors and develop a minister's curriculum for dying patients. Health and social service providers will learn about elder abuse, free medicine for indigents and end-of-life ethical and legal issues.

While geriatric centers are new to South Carolina, the trend is growing, Forti said. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has funded 34 other geriatric education centers around the country.

Newry Hosts Project Kickoff



On Friday August 17, 2001, Oconee County held a project kickoff meeting for Newry residents regarding the Newry Infrastructure Project. This innovative project is a partnership between Oconee County, the City of Seneca, and the Oconee County Sewer Commission, and will replace and upgrade aging and malfunctioning water and sewer lines in the Newry mill village. For the first time, the mill village will be connected to public water and sewer, instead of relying on a small,

privately run utility to supply them with their infrastructure needs. The Newry Mill Village Infrastructure Project is being funded by Oconee County and state and federal grants, and is being administered by the ACOG.

At the meeting, held at the Newry Town Hall, Oconee County Supervisor/Chair Ms. Ann Hughes thanked Newry residents for their patience while various aspects of the project were being ironed out. She signed the construction contract along with Mr. Robert Medlin, owner of Kris Mechanical, Inc., which will be doing the construction work in the mill village.

Mr. Alan Pope of Goldie & Associates, the engineering firm for the project, explained the construction schedule and how construction will affect yards and traffic. Mr. Mike Smith of the City of Seneca also answered residents' questions concerning the billing process, once construction is complete. Approximately 40 residents of the mill village were in attendance; they were very excited that construction will finally begin.

Appalachian Development Corporation

Robert Bryan of Greenville, South Carolina, was approved for a loan in the amount of \$50,000. Mr. Bryan is in the process of establishing and opening Euro-Rover Automotive Services, Inc., in Greenville. The ADC funding will be used to help finance the building and equipment to be located at the corner of Waddell and Warehouse Roads in Greenville County. BB&T of South Carolina is providing primary financing for the project in an amount in excess of \$100,000. Mr. Bryan's business will provide automotive repair services for a variety of vehicles. Two to four jobs are to be created.

Calendar of Events

- September 5 Upstate S. C. Gerontological Society Chapter Meeting, 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m., St. Francis Women’s Hospital Office Building.
- September 13 Focal Point Task Force Meeting, 10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Chapin Recreation Center.
- September 13 COA Directors Meeting, 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m., Council Boardroom.
- September 14 Summer School of Gerontology Planning Committee Meeting, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Columbia.
- September 18 DHHS/AAA Meeting, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Capital Senior Center, Columbia.
- September 20 Joint Conference on Aging Planning Meeting, 10:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., SCANPHA Conference Room, Columbia.
- September 21 SC4A Meeting, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., Lexington County Aging and Recreation Commission.
- September 26 Regional Aging Advisory Committee Meeting, 10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Council Boardroom.
- September 28 Appalachian COG Board of Directors Meeting, 10:30 a.m., Council Boardroom.

VIEWPOINT

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