

# FACING FACTS

*An Updated Study of Issues Shaping  
Sumter, Clarendon and Lee Counties*



2008

## **PREFACE**

### **Facing Facts: An Updated Study of Issues Shaping Sumter, Clarendon and Lee Counties (2008)**

It has been over two years since “Facing Facts: A study of issues that shape our region” was published. The intent of the original report and focus group meetings were to biennially measure the progress on the most pressing issues facing Sumter, Clarendon and Lee residents and to keep the community aware of the priority issues needing investment of resources. The original report was published in 2006 using the input of about 30 community and industrial leaders and concerned citizens who represent diverse segments of the three counties served by both the United Way of Sumter, Clarendon and Lee Counties and Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments.

Santee-Lynches Regional COG, in conjunction with the United Way, has spent the past several months reviewing the issues in the original Facing Facts and updating data.

“Facing Facts” provides a broad range of data on the people and communities in Sumter, Lee and Clarendon counties with an emphasis on health and human service needs, gaps and recommended areas for future investment.

Five general focus areas were included in the original report and the 2008 update. They are the following:

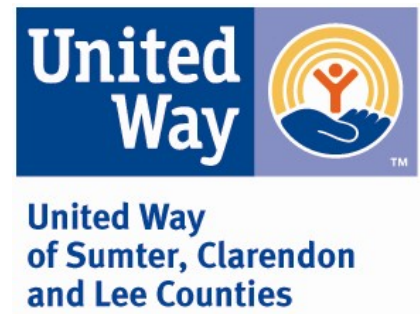
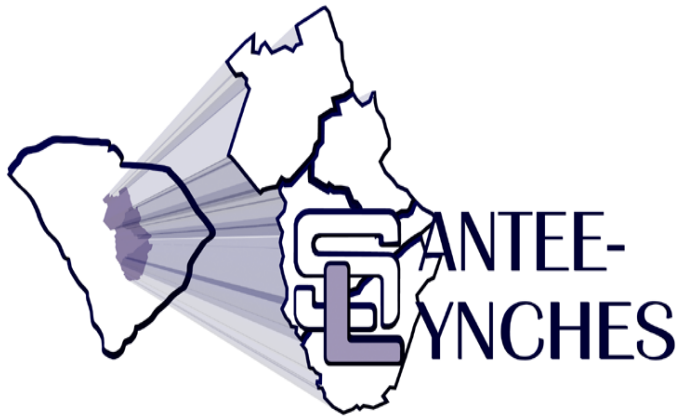
- Building strong families, individuals, children and youth
- Affordable housing and public transportation access
- Creating quality educational opportunities for pre-school children, youth and adults
- Economic development, jobs and civic engagement
- Enhancing community health and recovery opportunities

Each focus area should be viewed as having a direct impact on the other areas and not necessarily as an independent topic. No one public or private agency or government program can address all the needs in any one of the five focus areas. Only through diligent work and joint partnership efforts linked at the local level to neighborhood concerns can the needs in any area be addressed and the community at-large achieve a better quality of life. All five focus areas have an impact on the long-term well-being of the United Way’s service area.

As we all “face the facts” presented in this report, we can gain an understanding of the challenges that surround us and through subsequent discussions determine how to make the tri-county area a better place to live and grow. Together, we can shape our area into a healthier, more prosperous community.

The hope of this project is that it will ultimately do the following:

- Be an effective resource to educate the general public on the most critical quality-of-life needs, issues and trends in the tri-county area
- Be a valuable tool for the communities to use as a barometer of the conditions and improvements necessary for the tri-county area to move forward
- Be a catalyst to mobilize people to take action and implement solutions regarding the communities' conditions
- Be a resource to non-profit organizations, government agencies, policymakers, faith-based organizations, foundations, private corporations and others that are concerned with human service issues



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## Executive Summary

### Families

*Teen pregnancies have declined in the tri-county area*

- Since the late 1990s teen pregnancies are down in each county, but the teen birth rate per 100 females in the counties is still generally above the state average.

*Out-of-wedlock births are extremely high in the tri-county area*

- Births to unwed mothers as a percentage of total births are close to 50 percent in Sumter, slightly above the state average. Out-of-wedlock births are extremely high in Clarendon and Lee. The percentage of single-parent families in the counties is also above the state norm. Higher percentages of single-parent families, which are prevalent among African Americans, cause a significant parenting strain generally placed on the mother that often manifests itself in lack of nurturance, discipline, teaching and language use for children during their formative years. The end result of inadequate parenting behaviors is generally a lack of educational attainment for children and more poverty.

*Idle (out-of-school) youth totals are high*

- Idle (out-of-school) youth totals are high in the tri-county area and the state, especially among African-American males. Some of these idle youth are arrested and become part of the juvenile justice system. About 80 percent of juvenile justice cases in the tri-county area involve African Americans.

*The senior population is growing in the tri-county area*

- Given aging of “Baby Boomers,” the senior population is expanding in the three counties.
- Similar to overall poverty trends, the tri-county area has more seniors in poverty than the U.S. and state average. About 22 percent of all area seniors were in poverty in 2000.

### Housing and Public Transit

*Potential home ownership is largely only financially feasible for the area’s middle- and upper-class*

- Given rapidly rising new home construction values and increasing poverty rates, larger percentages of homeowners and renters are likely becoming economically burdened.

*Homeless totals are rising in the tri-county area and the state with very limited shelter options locally*

- Given gradually increasing poverty rates and a growing divide between the rich and poor, the best estimates show homeless totals are on the rise in all three counties and the state. The number of emergency, transitional and permanent shelter beds in the tri-county area is very limited.

*Overall public transportation ridership has increased in the region*

- Increased contract-service ridership other than Medicaid and worker commuter routes have offset decreases in Medicaid and fixed route ridership. Several possible strategies exist to sustain and grow ridership, though many may depend on additional funding.

### Education

*Standardized test scores in the tri-county area are below the state average*

- Standardized test scores on the PACT, SAT and ACT are lowest in Lee County and Clarendon School District 1. Scores are generally highest in Sumter 17 and Clarendon 3.

*Public school graduation rates have improved in the tri-county area*

- Sumter County has the highest graduation rate of the three counties and is currently on par with the state average. Lee County has the lowest graduation rate.
- African-American males have the highest percentage of dropouts in the area and the state.

*The percentage of public school students in the tri-county area entering post-secondary education is below the state average*

- Clarendon and Sumter counties have the highest percentage of students entering post-secondary training directly after high school and are slightly below the state norm. Sumter has shown annual percentage improvement. Lee County has the lowest percentage of students entering post-secondary education. Due in part to fewer students entering post-secondary education, adult educational attainment levels in the tri-county area are below the state norm.

*High relative family poverty rates in the tri-county area curtail student achievement*

- Research shows there is a direct correlation between a child from a low-income family and that child's lack of school readiness. Issues contributing to family poverty include single-parent families, and lower educational and income levels. Family poverty is especially prevalent among minorities in the tri-county area and the state. Educational statistics bear this out as a relatively high percentage of African-American males demonstrate a lack of readiness for the first grade in the tri-county area and state. A potential solution to this dilemma is expansion of early childhood education programs.

## **Economy**

*The tri-county area has suffered significant job losses overall since 2000*

- Offshoring, increased technologies necessitating fewer laborers, a marketplace requiring a more technically skilled workforce and other economic development factors have resulted in significant net job losses in Sumter County, the industrial center of the tri-county area. The majority of the area's job losses have been lower-skilled, lower-wage manufacturing jobs. These trends have also occurred in other rural counties in the state and Southeast.
- Job losses have resulted in increased unemployment rates in the three counties. Estimates show the tri-county unemployment rate for African Americans and other minorities is significantly higher than the rate for whites.
- Like many rural counties in the state and Southeast, job losses in the three counties are curtailing any population growth.

*Per capita income growth in the tri-county area is about equal to the state and U.S. averages*

- In recent years, percentage income growth in the three counties is on par with state and national increases. Despite the increases, income levels are still significantly below the U.S. average. A contributing factor to lower wages is fewer relative skilled workers in the area.

## **Health**

*Mental illness case rates in the tri-county area are above the state average*

- The rate of population served for severe and persistent mental illness in Lee and Clarendon has typically been very high relative to the state average. All three counties have seen decreasing "penetration rates" for clients served, but the decline is largely due to reduced mental health staff.

*HIV and STD case rates in the tri-county area are well above the state average*

- Similar to the state, the vast majority of HIV and STD cases in the counties involves African Americans and is the result of unprotected heterosexual sex.

*Inadequate prenatal care and low birth-weight rates in the area are above the state average*

- The rate of low birth-weight babies to total births is very high in Lee and Clarendon compared to the state and national average. Sumter's rate is close to the state norm.

*Hospitalizations and costs associated with the uninsured are rising in the area and the state*

- Lee's uninsured hospital discharges and associated costs both doubled from 2003-'06, far exceeding average state increases. Clarendon's rate of uninsured hospitalizations is above the state average; while Sumter's rise in the uninsured is similar to the S.C. norm.

# Building strong families, individuals, children and youth

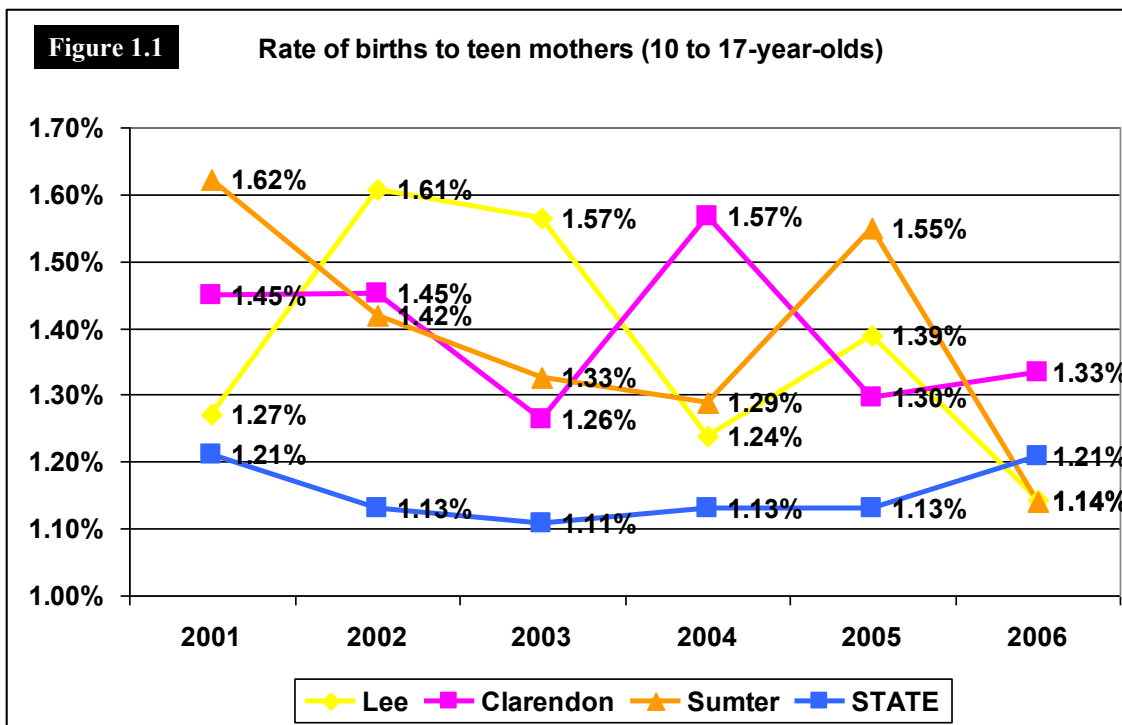
Goal: To provide a community structure that has a positive impact on each person's development and ability to contribute to their families and others.

Prioritized issues that can be affected by community actions:

- A. *Reduce incidence of teen pregnancy and single-parent families*
- B. *Provide training to enhance parenting skills*
- C. *Reduce incidence of substance-abuse problems*
- D. *Satisfy the recreational needs and quality of life opportunities for youth and seniors*

## Births to teen mothers (10 to 17-year-olds)

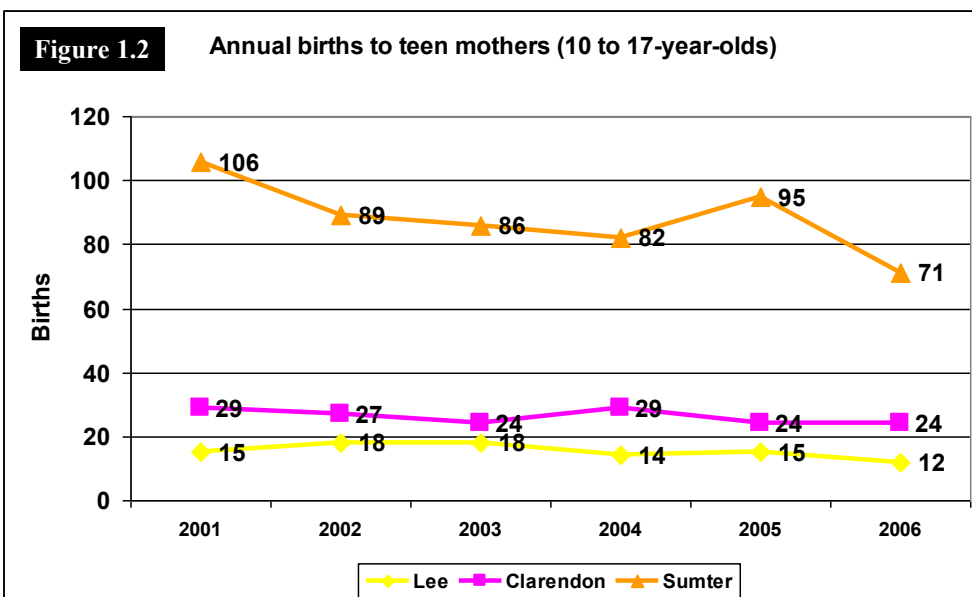
Figure 1.1 presents the percentage of girls, ages 10 to 17, who gave birth in each county annually. The tri-county area teen birth rates are volatile in the chart, but it's clear to see they generally are all above the state average teen birth rate, except for year 2006 when Lee and Sumter counties did better than the state norm. Sumter County has seen a general decrease in teen birth rates since 2001 with the exception of 2005. Clarendon and Lee counties' rates are more inconsistent; while the state saw a general decrease until 2006.



Source: S.C. DHEC, Division of Biostatistics

Figure 1.2 shows actual teen births in the three counties by year. The chart indicates teen births in Sumter County have decreased annually with the exception of 2005 where there was an increase. Births to teens in Clarendon and Lee counties don't show as much change.

Since the late 1990s however, all three counties have seen improvement. From 1996-98, Sumter County averaged 114 teen births each year; Clarendon recorded about 36 births annually and Lee averaged 27.



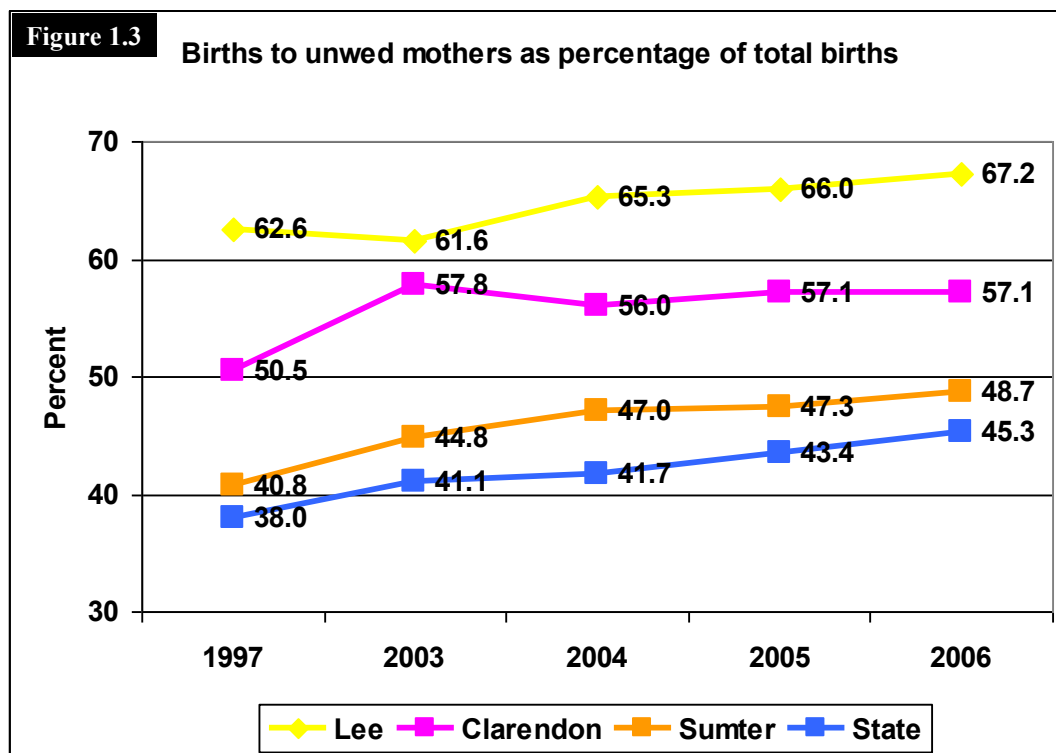
Only live births to teen mothers are recorded here; thus, abortions and fetal deaths are not included. **According to studies in the field, the declines can be attributed to enhanced use of contraceptives and not necessarily abstinence.**

Continuing reductions in this category are critical since research shows births to teen mothers can result in numerous societal problems. These social ills include higher risk of mothers not graduating from high school, poor levels of prenatal care, and increased potential for child abuse. Children are more likely to perform poorly in school, engage in criminal activity and become teen parents themselves. Additionally, births to teen mothers also create a significant economic strain when considering government payments through Medicaid and child support payments, which often have to be made by an unwed father of the child.

### Births to unwed mothers (All ages)

Over the last 20 years, births to unwed mothers have become a serious issue across the U.S. Unwed mothers and their children face a high risk of poverty due to low relative household income. Through the last decade statistics show about one in three unwed mothers in the tri-county area who give birth have less than a high school diploma or GED, seriously curtailing their earnings potential. State educational attainment statistics for unwed mothers are very similar. These mothers also face a difficult challenge in balancing work and rearing their children during the child's critical early years of mental development. Research reveals there is a direct correlation between a child from a low-income family and that child's lack of readiness for school.

Births to unwed mothers have increased significantly in Sumter County through the years as evidenced by Figure 1.3 while total births in the county have been fairly flat. In 1997, 40.8 percent of all births in Sumter were to unwed mothers. In 2006, the county rate was 48.7 percent, 3.4 percent above the state average. Clarendon and Lee counties have also seen spikes in births to unwed mothers as a percentage of total births.



Source: S.C. DHEC, Division of Biostatistics

Statistics reveal 79.5 percent of out-of-wedlock births in the tri-county area since 1997 have been by African-American females and 20.0 percent by white females. The general population breakdown of the three counties is 50.2 percent African-American, 47.1 percent white and 2.7 percent other races. Since 1997, 59 percent of all unwed mothers in the tri-county area have been 18-24 years old.

Weighing births to unwed mothers as a percentage of total births for the counties and the state shows the problem is getting more severe. All geographic areas show an increase through the years since 1997 as revealed in Figure 1.3.

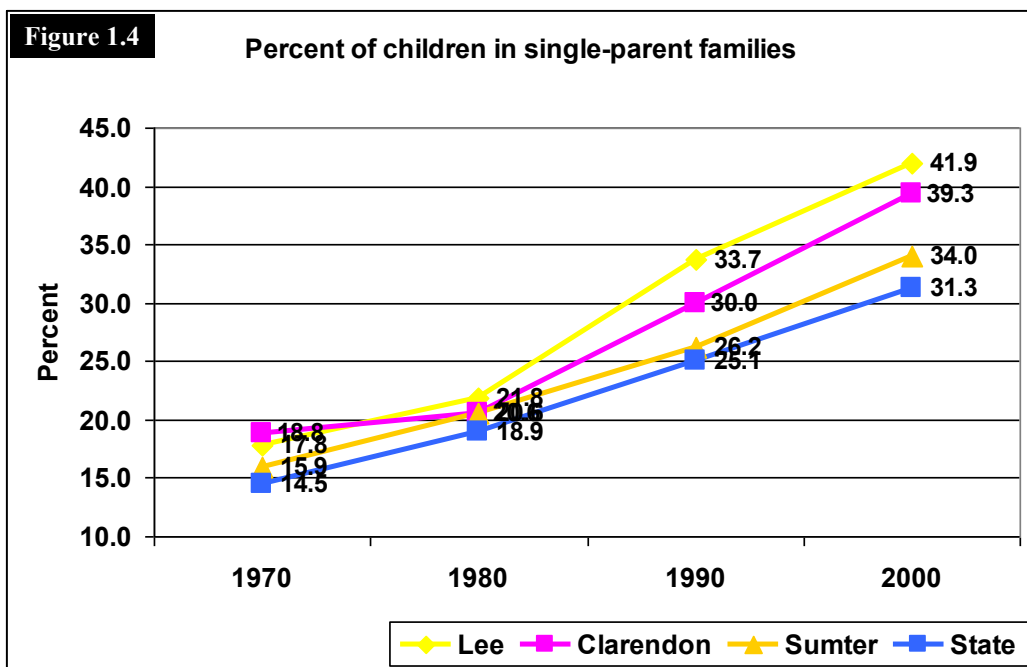
The statistics are especially telling for Lee and Clarendon counties. About two of every three births in Lee in recent years are to unwed mothers. In Clarendon, the percentages have increased from 50 percent in 1997 to 57.1 percent in 2006. Sumter's totals have risen from about 41 percent to almost 49 percent during the timeframe. State averages are slightly below Sumter. The percentages illustrate the scope of the social problem and its long-term economic implications on the tri-county area.

Births to unwed mothers are also on the rise nationally. In the late 1990s, the U.S. average was about 33 percent. In 2005, the rate was 36.8 percent according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Unwed mothers often experience inadequate prenatal care due to lower income levels and these mothers often give birth to low birth-weight babies. These conditions are discussed in the Health section of this report.

### Single-parent families

The continuing rise in out-of-wedlock births and high divorce rates has resulted in a tremendous increase in single-parent families throughout the U.S. and South Carolina in recent decades. The tri-county area has a particularly high rate of single-parent families. As of the 2000 Census, 41.9 percent of all children 17-and-under in Lee County lived in single-parent families as Figure 1.4 shows. In Clarendon the rate was 39.3 percent and Sumter followed at 34.0 percent.



Source: U.S. Census 2000

In 2000, 31.3 percent of all South Carolina children were from single-parent households. The percentage of children in single-parent families has more than doubled in each county and the state since 1970. Given higher birth rates to unwed mothers in recent years, the percent of children in single-parent families will undoubtedly continue to rise when the 2010 Census is taken. Some intra-Census data suggests the state rate will be in the high 30s.

### Poverty rate of single-parent families with children

As previously discussed, families that lack two parents in the home face much greater risk of poverty. Often these households are led by a mother who may lack sufficient education to earn family-sustaining wages. U.S. Census statistics reveal for every three children in poverty in the state, two are from a single-parent family. Data also shows if a child in the state is in a single-parent family, there is a 34.0 percent probability he will be living in poverty (see Table 1.1). If the child is in a traditional two-parent family, the risk of poverty is 6.2 percent in the state. As would be expected these trends hold up in the tri-county area, even though poverty percentages are somewhat higher in each category.

**Table 1.1** Single-parent families and poverty

Area	Minority children in single-parent families	White children in single-parent families	Children in single-parent families in poverty	Children in married-couple families in poverty
Clarendon	53.2%	17.9%	42.7%	11.5%
Lee	51.6%	18.1%	39.9%	9.0%
Sumter	49.0%	17.3%	36.6%	7.2%
STATE	52.0%	19.0%	34.0%	6.2%

Source: U.S. Census 2000

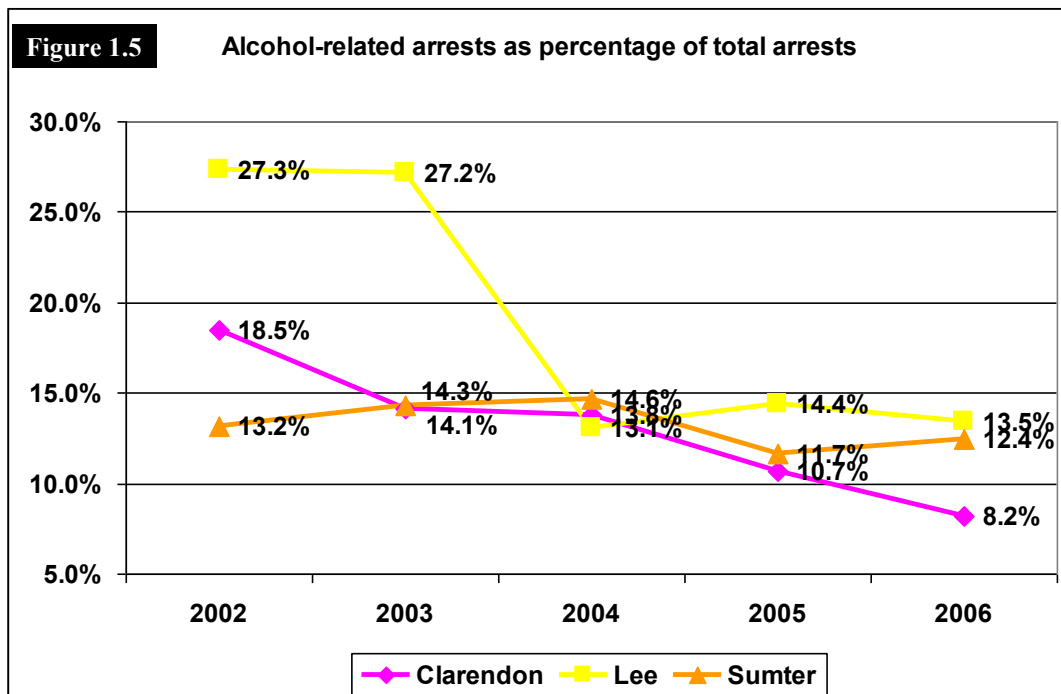
Therefore, greater efforts to reduce out-of-wedlock births and the divorce rate are part of the solution to lowering poverty levels. Children in poverty face heightened risk of lack of school readiness. Outreach needs to be done in the African-American community to remedy the breakdown of the traditional family since data shows about one-half of all African-American children are in single-parent families.

In addition to poverty, single-parent families face increased risks for many other difficulties including lack of proper child supervision and preventative medical care, juvenile delinquency and high school non-completion. These effects among many others make the growing number of single-parent families important targets for community involvement.

### Alcohol-related arrests

Alcohol abuse is a long-standing problem in society. Alcohol is a drug but it's not perceived to have the negative impact of illegal drugs such as cocaine, crack, heroin, marijuana and methamphetamines. However, in reality, alcohol abuse causes similar damage to individuals and families.

In recent years, alcohol-related arrests have declined in the tri-county area and the state. According to police, this is partially due to effective efforts by law enforcement to deter alcohol-related crimes. Fewer alcohol arrests are also largely due to local law enforcement's enhanced efforts in fighting illegal drugs instead of alcohol as is explained later. Many consider the rate of DUI arrests depends heavily on the aggressiveness of law enforcement.



Source: South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, 2002-2006 data

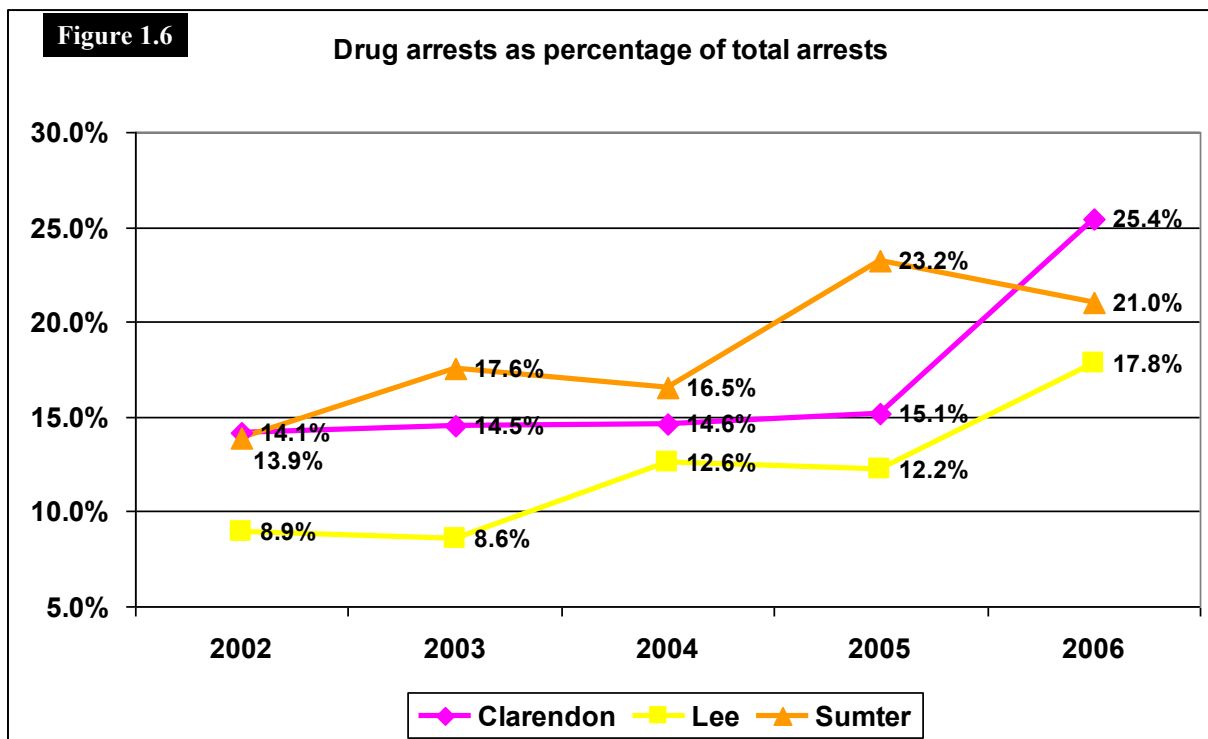
As Figure 1.5 illustrates, Clarendon and Lee counties have seen total alcohol-related arrests as a percentage of total arrests decrease from high levels in 2002. Alcohol-related arrests include DUIs, liquor law violations and drunkenness. Sumter has experienced a smaller decline, but the county didn't have as high a percentage of alcohol arrests at the outset in 2002. State percentages of alcohol arrests compared to total arrests are similar to Sumter, falling about 2 percent from 15.6 percent to 13.7 percent over the five-year period. All three counties' alcohol arrests were below the state average in 2006.

The big declines in Clarendon and Lee are similar to other small, rural counties in the state. Generally these counties have very limited law enforcement resources and in recent years more manpower is being focused on drug crime efforts.

### Drug crime arrests

Law enforcement emphasis on fighting drug activity has been growing in recent years in the tri-county area and across the state as evidenced by increasing percentages of drug law violations compared to total arrests. While illegal drugs are a factor in the commission of a multitude of crimes, drug law violations by themselves rank as the highest crime category in the state. In 2006, 17 percent of all arrests in the state were drug law violations according to State Law Enforcement Division data. Generally, drug crime arrests lead all arrests in most counties also.

Figure 1.6 illustrates the increasing percentage of drug arrests in the tri-county area through the years, especially in Clarendon and Lee counties. According to law enforcement officials, the likely rationale for the large increases is added focus and resources on the part of police in tackling drug activity. For each county, drug arrests grew significantly as a percentage of total arrests during the five-year period from 2002 to 2006. For the state overall, drug arrests climbed from 13 percent of all arrests to 17 percent during the timeframe.



Source: South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, 2002-2006 data

Counties similar to Sumter also showed more drug arrests as a percentage of total arrests during the five-year period. Aiken, Anderson, Greenwood, Lancaster and Orangeburg counties all had trends similar to Sumter. Additionally, counties similar to Clarendon and Lee – Allendale, Dillon, Hampton, Jasper and Marlboro – had increasing percentages as well.

Law enforcement must continue its emphasis on getting drugs off the street and there is a need for a concerted effort by private and public agencies to implement more effective and far-reaching drug prevention and rehabilitation programs. These expanded programs must operate both in the community and as part of the criminal sentencing system.

Reviewing annual arrest data from SLED for years 2002-'06 found that males are significantly more involved in drug activity than females, with African-American males outnumbering white males. A percentage breakdown of drug arrests in the state by race and gender for the five years showed the following:

**5-year summary of drug arrests in state by demographic (2002-'06)**

- 45.8% African-American males
- 36.2% White males
- 11.0% White females
- 6.4% African-American females
- 0.5% Other races

Not only is illegal drug use a growing criminal activity and the root cause of other crimes, it weighs heavily on individuals, families and communities in the tri-county area. The economic, medical and emotional costs to families of a drug abuser are great and far reaching.

**Table 1.2** Substance-abuse arrests as percentage of total arrests

Area	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Clarendon	32.6%	28.6%	28.4%	25.8%	33.6%
Lee	36.2%	35.8%	25.7%	26.6%	31.3%
Sumter	27.1%	31.9%	31.1%	34.9%	33.4%
STATE	28.6%	28.3%	27.3%	28.5%	30.7%

*Source: South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, 2002-2006 data*

When weighing drug and alcohol abuse together, substance-abuse crimes are fundamentally the core of criminal activity in the local area and the state as shown in Table 1.2. While substance abuse is a factor in the commission of a multitude of crimes, solely by themselves alcohol and drug abuse account for basically one of every three crimes locally and statewide.

**Youth population demographics**

According to the best estimates available, the percentage of youth in the tri-county area in poverty has been increasing slightly since 2000. The Census Bureau's Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates calculates the number of children 17-and-under in poverty by county. The poverty level is below an income cutoff or threshold, where a family needs public money and service to subsist. The threshold varies based on family size and number of children under 18 years old. If a family's total income is less than the threshold, then the family is considered below the poverty level. Examples of poverty thresholds from 2004 were the following:

**Family size & composition**

- Three people (one child under 18)
- Four people (two children under 18)
- Five people (three children under 18)

**Income threshold**

- \$15,205
- \$19,157
- \$22,543

According to the 2004 estimates, 26.1 percent of children in the tri-county area were living in poverty (11,017 of 42,258). The state average was almost 5 percent lower at 21.2 percent. (More statistics on youth in poverty are in the Education section.)

**Table 1.3** Children 17-and-under in poverty – 2004 estimates

County	Youth in poverty	Total youth	Poverty rate
Clarendon	2,463	8,012	30.7%
Lee	1,389	4,942	28.1%
Sumter	7,165	29,304	24.5%
<b>Tri-county</b>	<b>11,017</b>	<b>42,258</b>	<b>26.1%</b>
<b>STATE</b>	<b>217,509</b>	<b>1,025,986</b>	<b>21.2%</b>

Source: Census Bureau Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates, 2004

For a breakdown of poverty by race, the only measurement is Census 2000. Table 1.4 reveals minority children in the tri-county area are much more likely to suffer from poverty than white children.

As the table details, **one in three minority children in the area were in poverty in 2000.** In comparison, only **one in 12.5 white children in the area were in poverty.** State averages were similar to the local statistics. There is a clear connection between racial poverty and the prevalence of out-of-wedlock births and single-parent families in the African-American and minority community as discussed previously.

**Table 1.4** Children 17-and-under in poverty by race – 2000

Area	Minority children in poverty	White children in poverty
Clarendon	36.3%	12.1%
Lee	33.5%	1.9%
Sumter	32.0%	7.7%
<b>STATE</b>	<b>31.9%</b>	<b>9.4%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

While the majority of youth are either in school or working, the need to provide a variety of recreational outlets and opportunities is important to their quality of life. However -- similar to the state as a whole -- the tri-county area has a large number of “at-risk” youth who have not completed high school or made the transition from school to work, significantly affecting their development as future workers. Youth ages 16-19 that are neither in school, even part-time, nor working any hours are defined as “idle youth.” These kids are most at risk of substance abuse and other criminal activity. Recreational opportunities alone can’t address the problems facing idle youth, but since those services are needed by other youth, any participation from idle youth can be considered a positive.

Table 1.5 shows as of Census 2000 there were 1,030 youth in the area that fit the definition of idle. These “at risk” youth are hard to reach and pose a difficult problem for agencies.

**Table 1.5** Idle youth totals – 2000

County	Total
Clarendon	281
Lee	117
Sumter	632
<b>TRI-COUNTY TOTAL</b>	<b>1,030</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

A much better gauge of idle youth is to measure the disposition of public school students by grade enrollment levels. In the tri-county area, weighing official 8<sup>th</sup> grade membership against official 12<sup>th</sup> grade membership four years later can effectively estimate the number of students who are dropping out of the public school system. Total estimated dropouts by county and cohort class are provided in Table 1.6.

**Table 1.6** Estimated cohort class dropouts  
(8<sup>th</sup> grade membership – 12<sup>th</sup> grade membership 4 years later)

County	'00-01	'01-02	'02-03	'03-04	'04-05	'05-06	'06-07
Clarendon	182	139	164	135	135	163	165
Lee	138	101	81	74	48	78	94
Sumter	482	511	422	474	355	348	357
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>751</b>	<b>667</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>616</b>
<b>Dropouts each year per class</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>205</b>

As an example, in Sumter County the table shows 482 public school students from a total spring 8<sup>th</sup> grade enrollment of 1,487 in the 1996-97 year were not enrolled in 12<sup>th</sup> grade four years later in 2000-01. Sumter County's 12<sup>th</sup> grade enrollment that year in the three public high schools was 1,005. When adding Clarendon and Lee counties' cohort losses of 182 and 138 respectively for the four years for the Class of 2000-01, total "leavers" from the three counties' public school systems amounted to 802. Leavers would average 267 per academic year for the cohort.

A small percentage of these leavers are likely migrating out of their respective counties with their families. Census data does show slightly more youth 19-and-under are leaving the tri-county area than migrating in since 2000, but this total is less than five percent. Then, the vast majority of these 267 leavers from the public high schools for the 2000-01 cohort must have been dropouts. Some of these dropouts might have found employment in low-skill, low-wage fields, but the majority is likely idle youth, without a job and not in school.

Through the years, total leavers from the system have declined somewhat due mostly to improved high school graduation rates. However, the aggregate total of 1,547 for the seven cohorts shows the three counties are generating additional idle youth every year. Research shows about 40 percent of minority male students in the area eventually drop out of the public school system, representing the largest demographic of leavers. (More analysis of dropouts and county graduation rates are included in the Education section.)

While idle youth require much help to return to a productive lifestyle, another segment of the youth population that requires extra assistance are juveniles who have been arrested by law enforcement and entered the juvenile justice system. These kids usually range from 12 to 17 years old and could be in school or have dropped out. A very small percentage of juvenile offenders in the state are committed to a Department of Juvenile Justice long-term facility.

During fiscal year 2006 (July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2006) there were 608 juvenile justice cases in the tri-county area, which factors to about 35 cases per 1,000 area children. The state average was roughly 60 juvenile cases per 1,000 children. The lower area rate is likely partially due to juveniles in the tri-county area committing fewer crimes than the average county in the state. Another probable reason for the lower area rate is the counties have more intervention programs in place for area juvenile offenders than is the norm in the state, resulting in fewer repeat cases. State statistics show in 51 percent of cases in fiscal year 2006 juveniles had prior referrals to court. In the tri-county area only 41 percent of cases involved repeat juveniles, suggesting more intervention programs in the area. These state and local trends are also apparent in earlier years.

**Table 1.7** Fiscal 2006 juvenile justice cases in tri-county area

County	Total cases	13 & under	14 & 15 year-olds	16 & 17 year-olds	Whites	Afri.-Amer.	'Non-traditional' home setting*
Clarendon	119	19%	54%	27%	23%	77%	77%
Lee	53	42%	46%	12%	4%	96%	63%
Sumter	436	14%	43%	43%	19%	81%	76%

\* Non-traditional home means juvenile is not from a two-parent home, either both natural parents or a parent and stepparent.

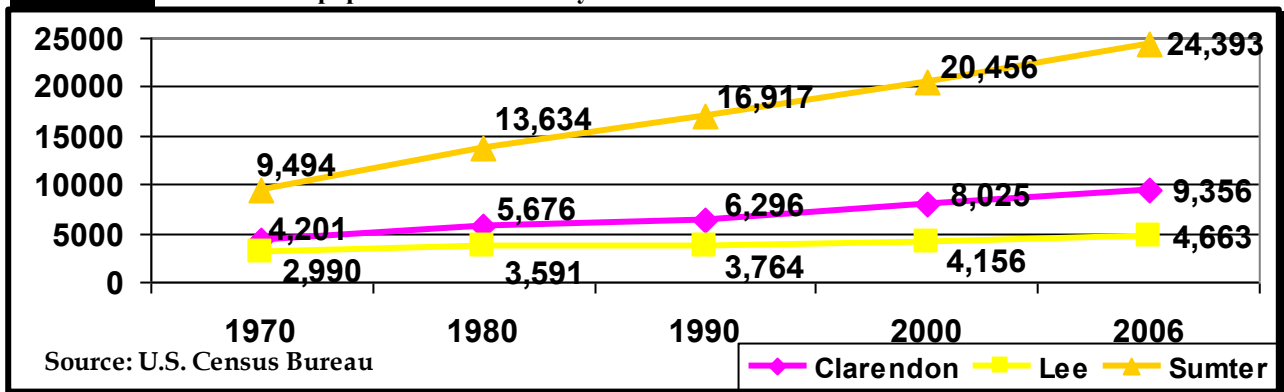
As Table 1.7 reveals, 82 percent of juvenile justice cases from summer 2005 to summer 2006 – or 496 of 608 – in three counties involved African Americans. This demographic total represented a percentage increase from the three previous years, where rates ranged from 75 percent to 77 percent. About three of every four juvenile cases in fiscal year 2006 involved a child from a non-traditional home, where two parents are not present. Additionally, 14 and 15-year-olds compose the bulk of juvenile cases in the tri-county area.

Continued efforts need to be made at prevention and intervention for “at risk” youth in part through adult-supervised recreational activities to help steer these children toward a better future.

### Senior population demographics

The 55-and-older segment of the population is the fastest-growing category of the American population and also the tri-county area. This age grouping includes “Baby Boomers” born between 1946 and 1964 - the largest cohort of people in U.S. history.

**Figure 1.7** 55-and-over population in tri-county area



As Figure 1.7 illustrates, Sumter County seniors have nearly doubled since 1980 rising from 13,634 in the 1980 Census to 24,393 in the 2006 estimate. Clarendon hasn't seen quite as much growth, increasing its totals by about 65 percent, and Lee has experienced a smaller rise in seniors. It's important to mention the majority of these seniors aren't necessarily new residents to the counties, but are residents aging into the senior category over time.

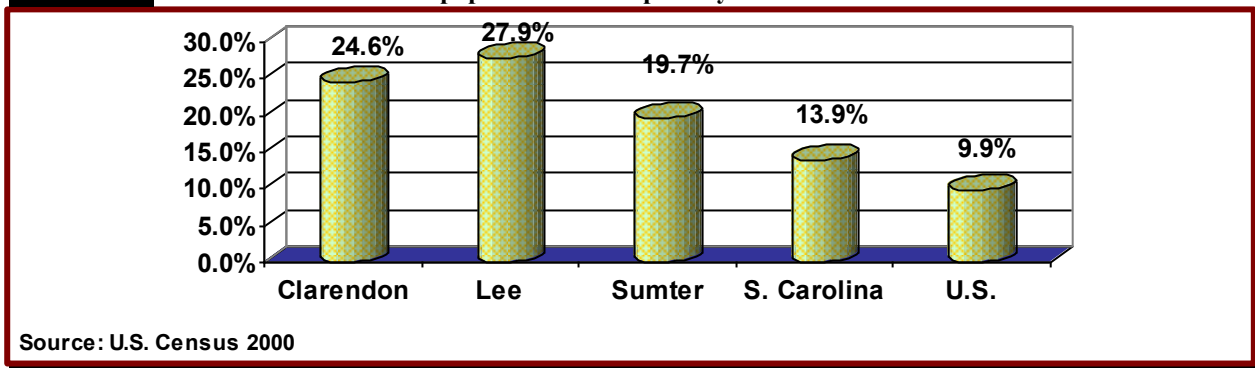
Population estimates data since 2000 indicates slightly more seniors are migrating out of the tri-county area than in, likely preferring to reside in areas with more natural amenities, such as the coast or mountains.

Many seniors have more available time, resources and interest in recreational activities than people of other ages. Senior population growth requires a re-evaluation of the scope of recreational activities in the counties. Although there are a significant number of these seniors who are interested in physical

recreation, the majority prefers a more cultural aspect of recreation. The expansion of the senior population in the tri-county area will continue, given more and more “Baby Boomers” aging into it. To attract more seniors to stay in the area and others to move in, recreational opportunities must expand to accommodate their interests. Significant research shows solid economic benefits in attracting retirees to an area.

Another portion of the senior population that warrants attention is the 65-and-over segment that lives below the poverty level. At the national level, 9.9 percent of seniors 65-and-older were below the poverty level at Census 2000. As would be expected the state total was somewhat higher at 13.9 percent. Poverty levels for seniors in Lee and Clarendon counties were very alarming: Lee doubled the state rate at 27.9 percent, meaning slightly more than one in four seniors 65-and-older in the county lived below the poverty threshold. Clarendon registered 24.6 percent of its elderly population in poverty. At Census 2000 Sumter County had 19.7 percent of its 65-and-over population below the poverty level, a figure still significantly higher than the U.S. average.

**Figure 1.8** Percent of 65-and-over population below poverty level



Numerically, the totals were 3,740 of 16,884 area seniors 65-and-older for whom poverty was determined, or 22.2 percent, were in poverty in 2000.

“Severe poverty” is another important measurement, gauging the percentage of people with family incomes below one-half of the poverty threshold. A total of 1,062 seniors 65-and-older in the tri-county area, or 6.3 percent, were in this category at Census 2000. Table 1.8 gives summary breakdowns.

**Table 1.8** 65-and-over population by poverty level

County	Below poverty	Severe poverty
Clarendon	1,099	298
Lee	653	224
Sumter	1,988	540
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,740 (22.2%)</b>	<b>1,062 (6.3%)</b>

It’s necessary to mention these statistics might not completely capture county poverty levels since poverty is somewhat difficult for the Census Bureau to measure, given many impoverished families might live with relatives or in a shelter and are not contained to a particular household. Census Bureau measurements are generally more precise when poverty is less and more families live in households with their own address.

Still, the data establishes that the tri-county area has a large number of seniors in economic distress. In terms of quality of life issues, these seniors pose a different challenge for our area. Recreational activities for this group of seniors would have to involve little or no cost and may also require transportation assistance from rural areas.

The area’s recreation and quality of life requirements must encompass a diverse mix of physical, cultural and social activities to accommodate the needs of the youth and elderly across various levels of economic status.

# Affordable housing and public transportation access

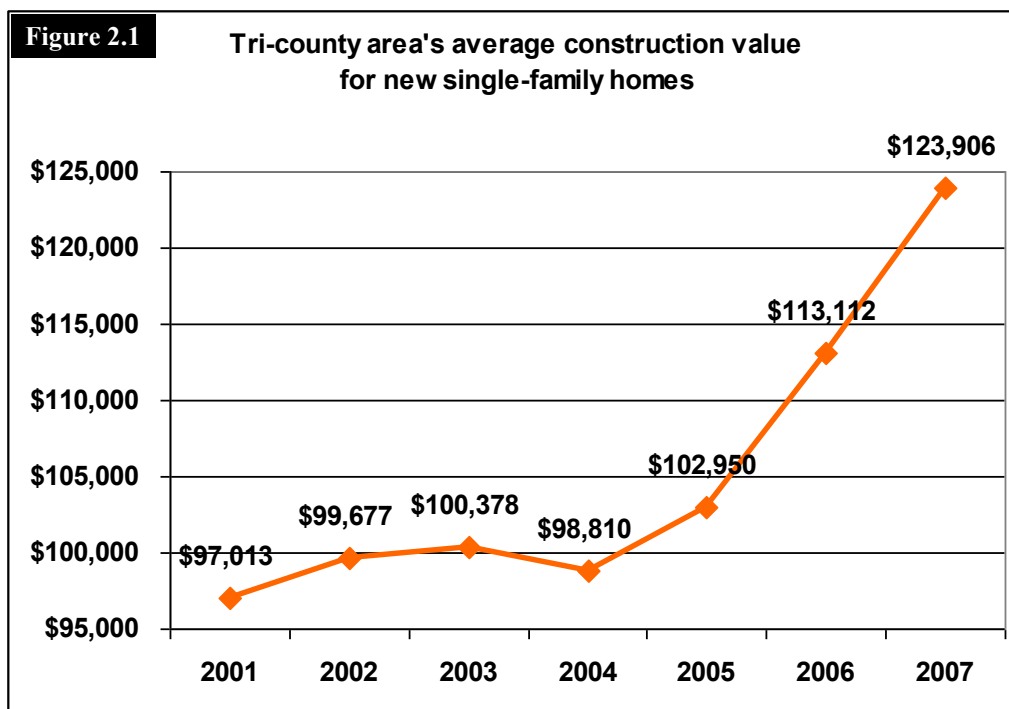
Goal: To provide opportunities for low-to-moderate income families and individuals to participate in home ownership or suitable alternatives; and to develop inexpensive and reliable public transportation to assist residents daily.

Prioritized issues that can be affected by community actions:

- A. *Increase access to affordable home ownership*
- B. *Provide affordable housing alternatives to home ownership*
- C. *Address homelessness issues*
- D. *Develop reliable, affordable and accessible public transportation systems to increase ridership*

## New home values

In recent years the new home market has grown extensively across the U.S. This trend has also held true in Sumter and Clarendon counties. Not only has the quantity of new single-family homes – also known as “stick-built homes” – grown considerably, but the construction value of these homes has soared dramatically as shown in Figure 2.1. The construction value of a home is the contractor-determined cost for building the home and is a low-side indicator of the new home’s selling price.



*Source: Clarendon, Lee and Sumter planning commission, 2001-'07 data*

From 2004 to 2007 the construction value of new homes in the tri-county area increased by over \$25,000, or 25.4 percent. Even after removing a high-priced, 84-unit, condo development in Clarendon County from year 2007 totals, the average new home construction value for that year is still \$120,676. The cost hikes are due mostly to increased building material costs and construction of larger and nicer homes. As stated, this value is only a low-side indicator of a new home’s selling price. Considering the average selling price markup, new homes in the three counties are currently only affordable for the area’s middle- and upper-class population.

While there is some funding available for affordable housing new home construction, the bulk of the new homes in the tri-county area are priced well above the financial means of a significant portion of the area’s population. This is especially the case for residents in Clarendon and Lee counties, where per capita personal income levels rank significantly below the South Carolina average and among the 10 lowest counties in the state as shown in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1**      **Per capita personal income – 2006**

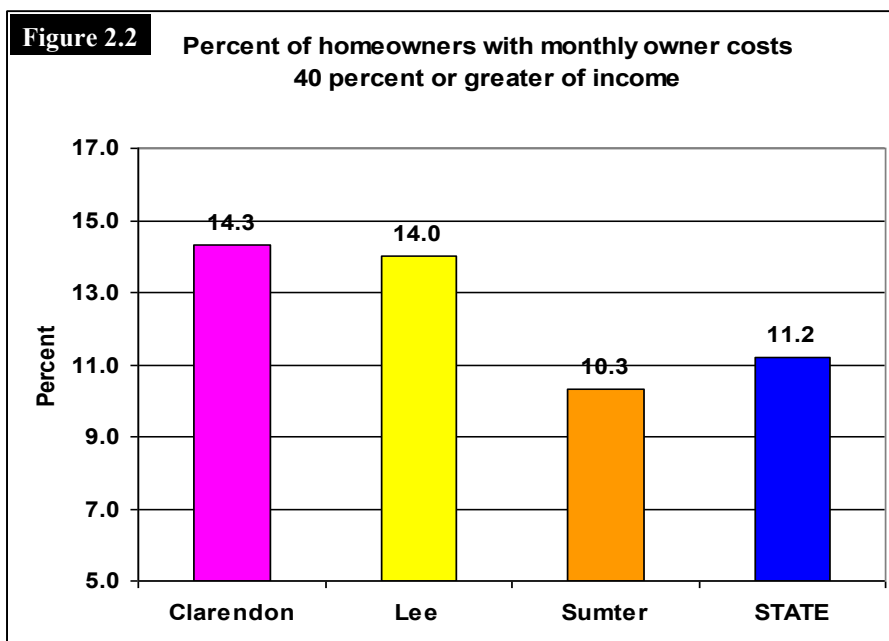
County	Total	Rank in state
Clarendon	\$22,350	37 <sup>th</sup> of 46
Lee	\$21,601	43 <sup>rd</sup> of 46
Sumter	\$26,242	23 <sup>rd</sup> of 46
<b>STATE</b>	<b>\$29,767</b>	<b>45<sup>th</sup> of 50 U.S. states</b>

*Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis*

As with many other economic and community variables, soaring new housing construction values reflect a growing divide between the rich and the poor. The value of home ownership for these county residents in the lower-income category is still critical. The most effective means of home ownership for these people in the counties is via rehabilitation of existing substandard housing stock, given the cost of new construction. The Sumter County Regional HOME Consortium, which serves all four counties in the Santee-Lynches Region, has determined there is ample supply of existing housing stock in the region. More funding is always a concern to service the low-income population. Continuous efforts should include aggressive pursuit of government grants, new initiatives by local non-profit agencies, and the establishment of public/private partnerships to develop financing options to fund affordable housing projects.

### Worker monthly housing costs

A homeowner's income significantly impacts housing affordability. When housing costs -- including mortgage, taxes, insurance and utilities -- exceed more than 40 percent of a family's income, the family is economically burdened and disadvantaged. As of Census 2000, about 14 percent of homeowners in Clarendon and Lee counties had monthly household costs of 40 percent or more of income as represented in Figure 2.2. Sumter County's percentage of burdened homeowners was actually below the state average of 11.2 percent at Census 2000. Given the "housing boom" and consumer credit crisis in recent years in the U.S. and region, percentage totals have likely increased in all areas.



Source: U.S. Census 2000

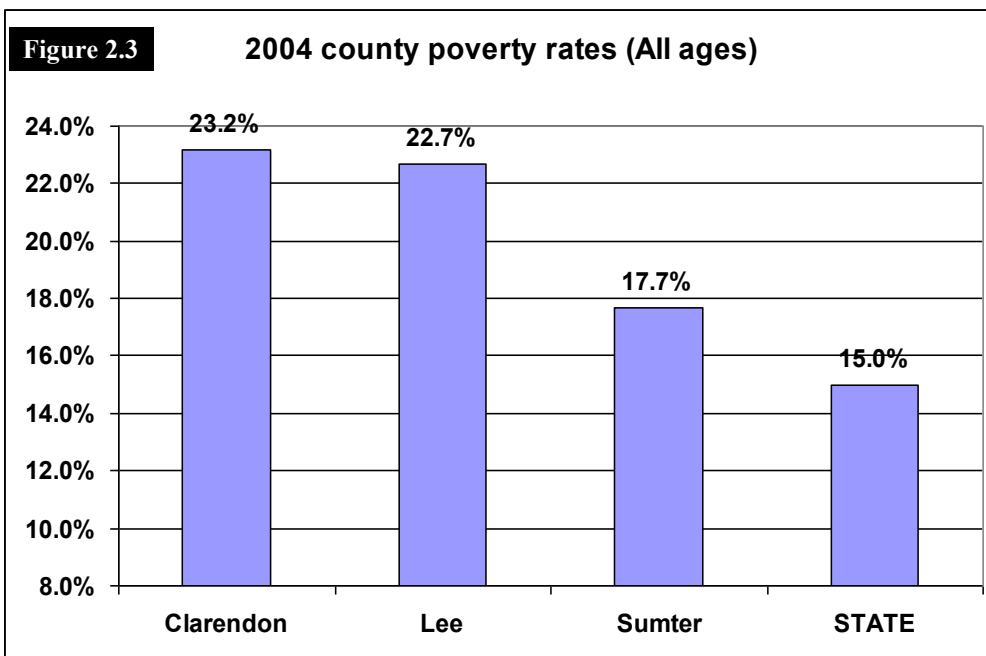
### Worker monthly rental costs

The tri-county area has a greater percentage of households in poverty than the state average. Measuring by eligible population, Clarendon and Lee counties' 2004 poverty rates are significantly above the South Carolina average of 15.0 percent and Sumter County is also above the state mark as shown in Figure 2.3. County and state poverty rates have increased slightly since Census 2000 according to the Bureau's modeling data. (Year 2004 poverty statistics are currently the latest reliable information available.)

The poverty level is below an income cutoff or threshold, where a person or family needs public money and service to subsist. The threshold varies based on family size and number of children under 18 years old. If an individual or family's total income is less than the threshold, the person or family is considered below the poverty level.

Many in the low-income category don't qualify for home ownership but instead rent apartments or duplexes, which are often subsidized. Much of the rental property in the three county seats (Manning, Bishopville and the city of Sumter) has been built for the lower-income population.

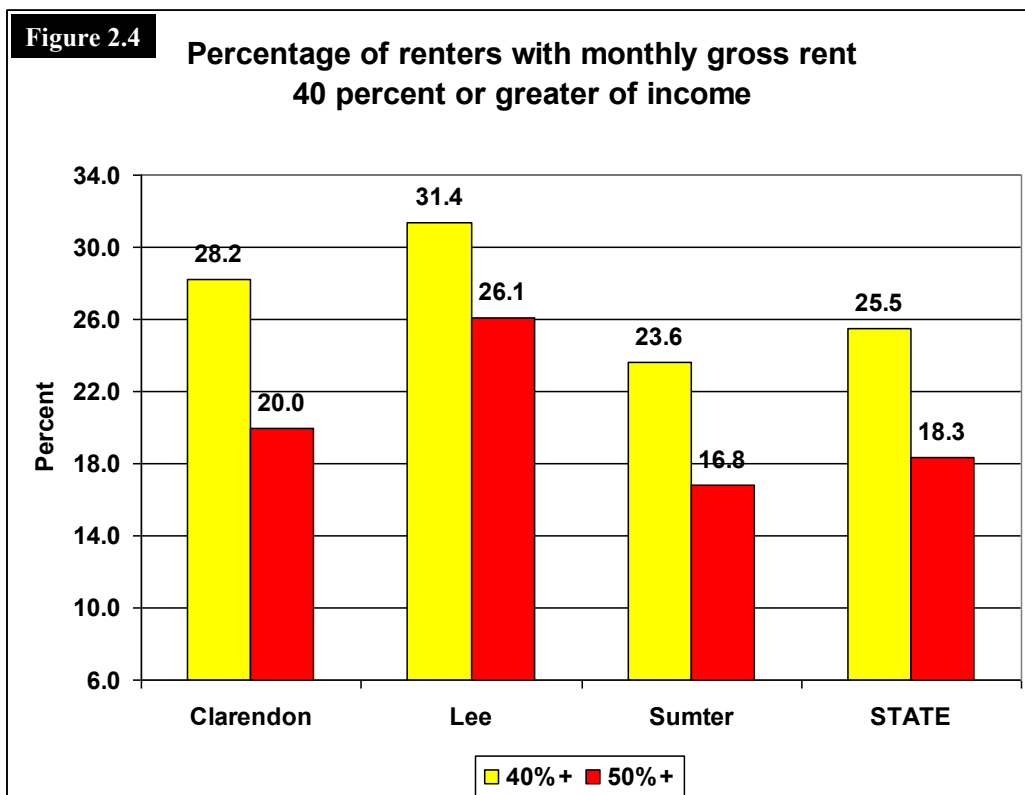
In the rural portions of each county, many people in poverty rent single-family homes. While these rentals are also primarily subsidized, the units are often in worse physical condition than subsidized housing in the county seats.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates, 2004.

Below-standard housing affects all segments of people in poverty and single mothers compose a significant portion of this group. These single-female head of households often rent homes that are substandard.

Figure 2.4 analyzes renters in the three counties and the state. Gross rental costs – including rent and utilities – are measured as a percent of household income. Clarendon and Lee have more renters who are economically burdened by rental costs, as measured by monthly gross rent at 40 percent or more of household income. Sumter's rate of cost-burdened renters of 23.6 percent at Census 2000 was below the state average of 25.5 percent.



Source: U.S. Census 2000

Figure 2.4 also details in red the percentage of renters spending 50 percent or more on gross rent at the time of Census 2000. The Census Bureau defines a renter who spends 50 percent or more on gross rent as "severely burdened." **A total of 26.1 percent of Lee rent-**

**ers spent 50 percent or more on gross rent and 20.0 percent of Clarendon renters spent likewise.** The state average in 2000 was 18.3 percent. Higher rates of cost-burdened renters threaten growth of home ownership in a county.

Since the state Housing Finance and Development Authority began its tax-credit program in 1988 Clarendon County has put in place 432 affordable rental units (through year 2007), a total similar to Sumter County's 487 even though the county's population is roughly only one-third of Sumter's.

The tax credit program brought on line only 232 affordable rental units in Lee County from 1988-2007. Part of the difficulty here is per capita personal income is so low in Lee – 59 percent of the U.S. average – any potential investor will find it difficult to earn a return on investment for a project in the county. This reinforces the need for Lee County residents to enhance educational attainment levels to improve employment rates and earnings potential.

An April 2008 market study of Sumter County prepared for the state Housing Finance and Development Authority found sufficient evidence for more affordable rental housing for low-income households in the county based on overall low vacancy rates and other factors. According to Lloyd Flores, president of the Total Care for the Homeless Coalition that serves the tri-county area, there is a need for more affordable housing in each county.

### **ACCRA cost of living survey of housing**

A review of housing costs from 2005-'08 for both stick-built homes and apartments conducted by the quarterly ACCRA survey for Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) shows Sumter County with less expensive housing costs dating back to 2005 compared to Anderson County and Camden. However, some larger metropolitan areas in the state – Columbia, Greenville and Myrtle Beach – rank lower than Sumter on average housing costs according to the data. This likely reflects initiatives in these cities to build lower-income housing in recent years. (Florence and Spartanburg counties didn't participate in the ACCRA survey enough to generate reliable average totals.) In the survey, monthly principal and interest payment for a new house and monthly rent for renters are considered "housing costs." To be included in the survey, homes and apartment complexes must meet selected criteria.

#### **Housing index costs (2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2005 - 1<sup>st</sup> quarter '08)**

Greenville	78.38
Myrtle Beach/Conway	80.47
Columbia	81.11
<b>Sumter</b>	<b>81.65</b>
Camden	84.24
Anderson	84.56

*Source: ACCRA cost of living index survey*

## **Homelessness**

Homelessness is an ongoing problem throughout the U.S. Homeless individuals lack a fixed, adequate residence. People become homeless due to various reasons that may include unemployment, divorce, domestic violence, illness, and release from a mental health institution or a correctional facility. The homeless require numerous services to reverse their current situation. The needs of the homeless consist of two main categories:

- 1) **Shelter** – This consists of **emergency housing**, which is a temporary shelter option for 30 to 90 days, and **transitional housing** – the next step after emergency shelter and providing full supportive services for three months to 24 months.
- 2) **Supportive services** – This consists of a range of services to address the physical, psychological, economic and social needs of the homeless person.

capturing the population group. Many homeless live with relatives and will neither show up in a shelter count nor a count of homeless living on the street. Also, according to providers in the field, there is a negative stigma with homelessness and many homeless consider themselves only “in transition” or “without a house” and not homeless. These factors make extrapolating the total number of homeless difficult.

Research by the Urban Institute and others shows analyzing county poverty rates of total population allows for relatively realistic estimates of the chronic homeless, who are always in a shelter; and the transient homeless, those who are in and out of shelters during a year. Given gradually increasing poverty rates through the years, homeless counts would also logically be rising. The state Office of Research & Statistics considers these measurements to be relatively accurate.

The best estimates of the transient homeless – also called “annualized homeless” since they experience a spell of homelessness at least once a year – is 6.3 percent of the people considered below poverty in a county. Using the 2004 Census Bureau Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates by county (latest available), annualized homeless estimates are first derived by multiplying 6.3 percent to the Bureau’s poverty estimate. Totals are listed in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2** Annualized (or transient) homeless estimates – 2004

County	People in poverty	Annualized homeless	Pct. of population
Clarendon	7,421	468	1.4%
Lee	4,308	271	1.3%
Sumter	18,301	1,153	1.1%
STATE	622,083	39,191	0.9%

Source: County homeless estimates based on 2004 poverty estimates

The estimates show Clarendon and Lee with higher percentages of the population that might seek a shelter during a year. All three counties had higher rates of annualized homelessness than the state average in 2004.

**Table 2.3** Point-in-time (or chronic) homeless estimates – 2004

County	Annualized homeless	PIT homeless	Pct. of population
Clarendon	468	78 to 156	0.2% to 0.5%
Lee	271	45 to 90	0.2% to 0.4%
Sumter	1,153	192 to 384	0.2% to 0.4%
STATE	39,191	6,532 to 13,064	0.2% to 0.3%

Source: County homeless estimates based on 2004 poverty estimates

Next, another calculation is performed to determine the counties’ “point-in-time homeless,” who are generally considered the chronic homeless. Typically, the annualized homeless total is 3 to 6 times larger than the chronic homeless. The totals in Table 2.3 give ranges for PIT estimates in the counties for 2004. Again, the totals here are above the state norm.

**It’s necessary to mention county poverty rates have most likely increased since 2004 so current homeless totals would be somewhat higher than totals listed here.**

### Homeless children – School district data

Another set of homeless estimates is produced by the public school districts on homeless children in the counties and – at least for Sumter County – may paint the most accurate picture of homelessness. The state Department of Education’s definition of “homeless” is broader than other definitions, including schoolchildren who are in shelters, lacking shelter, in substandard housing, or sharing the housing of other people (sometimes called “doubled-up”) due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason. All other homeless calculations have difficulty in measuring to this level of detail. The DOE sur-

veys each of the state’s school districts for homeless youth from the pre-school level through Adult Education. However, the key concern with the district counts is school districts with grant money for dealing with homeless children generally have much more accurate counts than the other districts. In recent years the two Sumter County districts have had grant money and conducted more rigorous counts of homeless schoolchildren; while the other area districts have not. A listing of homeless schoolchildren and youth by school district for the 2007-’08 academic year is provided next.

Homeless children and youth by school district for 2007-’08

District	Homeless
Clarendon 1	15
Clarendon 2	3
Clarendon 3	14
Lee	43
<b>Sumter 2</b>	<b>515</b>
<b>Sumter 17</b>	<b>226</b>

Source: S.C. Department of Education, 2007-’08 homeless data.

**Bold** indicates district had grant money to work with homeless schoolchildren.

Likely, the Sumter County school districts’ homeless counts come close to best describing the homeless problem in the county, given the broad definition of “homeless” used by DOE and rigorous efforts in counting the population. The total of 741 homeless schoolchildren for the two districts seems to be somewhat in line with the annualized county homeless estimate based on poverty rates of 1,153. Annual homeless children data for the Sumter districts show increases through the years, and state totals also show an increase in recent years. The higher totals for Sumter District 2 over District 17 are expected, given the more rural nature of the school district. Without grant money, the Clarendon and Lee totals can’t be considered an accurate measurement.

**Point-in-time totals for 2007 – S.C. Council on Homelessness**

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that each state conduct a point-in-time count of the homeless population on a single day in January every two years. The last PIT count for counties in the state was Jan. 25, 2007. *The totals were supposed to estimate 1) the number of HUD-defined homeless -- individuals who are currently in emergency or transitional shelter or literally unsheltered and living on the streets – and 2) people who are precariously and inadequately housed, paying too much for housing or otherwise at risk of losing their housing.* **Due to numerous data quality issues, such as low levels of effort in county counts, the homeless measurements couldn’t measure the second part of the homeless calculation and likely had difficulty in calculating the HUD-defined homeless. Therefore, the totals don’t provide an accurate picture of the homeless population in the counties or the state.** Nevertheless, the following are the official 2007 county homeless tallies as recorded by the state Council on Homelessness along with the level of effort in each county.

County point-in-time homeless totals

County	PIT homeless	Level of effort
Clarendon	214	None/very low
Lee	2	None/very low
Sumter	108	Low/moderate
STATE	6,759	Not applicable

Source: S.C. Council on Homelessness, 2007

Obviously, there are major differences in Sumter and Lee totals here compared to the point-in-time estimates based on county poverty rates discussed previously. Lee County’s PIT homeless count here of two people is most assuredly a dramatic undercount due to a very low level of effort in this count. Sumter County’s PIT count here is likely an undercount as well. The Sumter PIT count in the 190 to 380 range is likely more realistic, especially when considering a two-week count in 2007 for Sumter conducted by the area’s homeless coalition revealed about 688 homeless individuals.

### **Shelter and service needs to the homeless**

The Total Care for the Homeless Coalition consists of about 60 housing and supportive service providers that provide assistance to homeless individuals and homeless families with children in six counties, which include Clarendon, Lee, Sumter, Horry, Williamsburg and Georgetown. According to the coalition, the tri-county area has numerous shelter bed needs.

Many needs exist in Lee and Clarendon counties. In Lee there are currently no shelter beds, and in Clarendon about 23 beds are available in one transitional homeless shelter for family burnouts and others who can pay for at least some of their living expenses. The coalition estimates about 100 beds are needed in Lee and 150 more are necessary for the homeless in Clarendon. (These bed needs are comparable to the PIT homeless estimates based on poverty rates presented previously.)

Road blocks often occur when attempting to open a county shelter, such as lack of neighborhood support, according to the coalition. Low bed counts are common in small, rural counties, and the homeless in these areas are often referred to shelters in bigger cities (Sumter or Columbia) where shelter accommodations might be available. According to the coalition, bed needs are greater in Clarendon than Lee because of its location on Interstate 95, which attracts more transient homeless.

In Sumter County there are also very limited emergency and transitional shelter beds available for the homeless. Samaritan House and Lighthouse of Hope offer a combined total of about 40 emergency shelter beds. Wateree Community Actions (about 12 beds) and the YWCA (12-15 beds) also have a limited number of emergency beds, but the YWCA **only** accepts abused women and their children. As far as transitional housing, Sumter County has about 18 beds with the homeless generally having to pre-qualify as former inmates or substance abusers. According to the United Way of Sumter, Clarendon and Lee Counties, one of the biggest needs in the tri-county area is safe shelter for women with children.

According to the homeless coalition, total bed needs for Sumter could approach 750 to 1,000.

As far as supportive services for area homeless individuals, the coalition says the biggest unmet need is available transportation to take the homeless to receive services, such as to a doctor or even transporting the homeless to a shelter. Many have to walk miles to the nearest shelter. For homeless families with children, the biggest unmet need is affordable housing, according to the coalition. This need coincides with a need for more permanent housing shelters in the area. One permanent shelter with about 90 beds is located in Sumter and none exist in Lee or Clarendon.

### **Funding and education as solutions to homeless dilemma**

According to the coalition, a more comprehensive funding approach to solving homelessness is required on the part of the federal government and county and municipal government as homeless totals continue to rise. Supportive services offered to the homeless need to be more multi-faceted to effectively aid different subpopulations, such as homeless alcoholics and homeless women with children. These two subpopulations require different supportive services, and many existing shelters aren't equipped to effectively help the various subpopulations.

The coalition said most current approaches to helping the homeless are merely "Band-Aid" or patchwork fixes that provide short-term services but don't address helping the homeless individual become more self-sufficient. In the long run, not having a comprehensive approach to curtail homelessness results in more costs, such as chronic alcoholism, juvenile detention, vandalism and foster care for children. All these are hidden, long-term costs to the community for not effectively addressing the core issues faced by the homeless. Government on all levels must have a more proactive funding approach to address the root causes of homelessness. The coalition said these initiatives are lacking at this time.

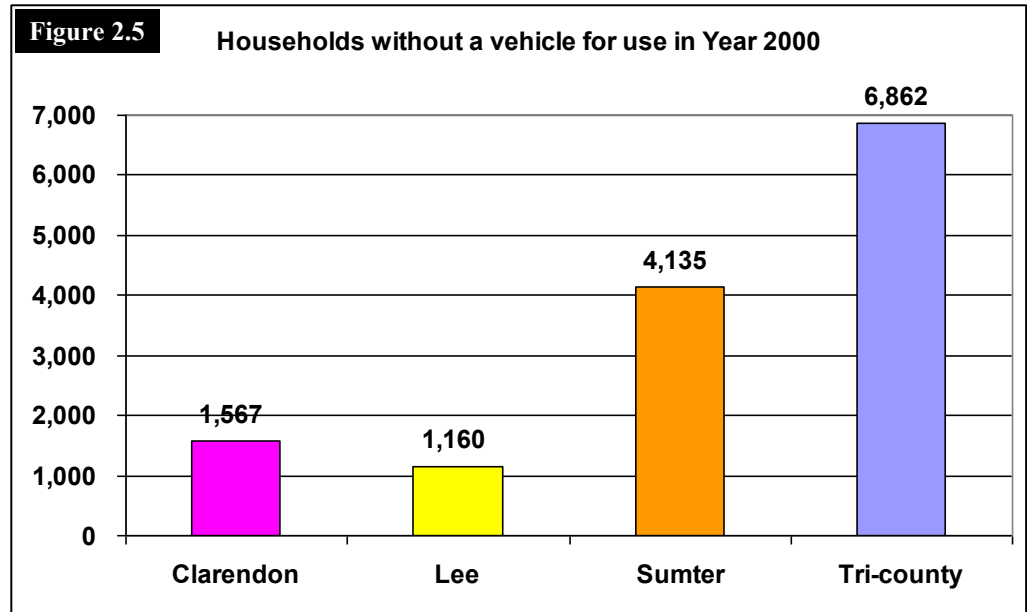
With apparent finite available funding, collective efforts to improve communities and public school graduation rates are necessary to somewhat curtail homelessness and poverty in the long-term.

## Public Transportation

Public transportation ridership statistics contained in this section include the four primary counties served by Santee Waterree Regional Transportation Authority (Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee and Sumter) and most of the statistics are not specifically broken out for the tri-county area. In some public transit statistics other counties are included as well. When that occurs it is appropriately cited.

The majority of the people in the three counties rely on a personal vehicle for all their transportation needs. However, there is a significant segment of the population that doesn't have access to a vehicle at their household. These individuals are considered "transportation dependent" and rely on public or private transportation to meet needs. According to Census 2000 sample estimates, all three counties have a higher percentage of households without a vehicle available for use in comparison to the state average of 9.02 percent.

Sumter had 10.96 percent of households without an available car (4,135 households); Clarendon registered 13.27 percent of households (1,567 households) and Lee had 16.85 percent of households (1,160) without a vehicle, a percentage nearly double the state average. In total, there were an estimated 6,862 households without a vehicle for use in the tri-county area as shown in Figure 2.5.



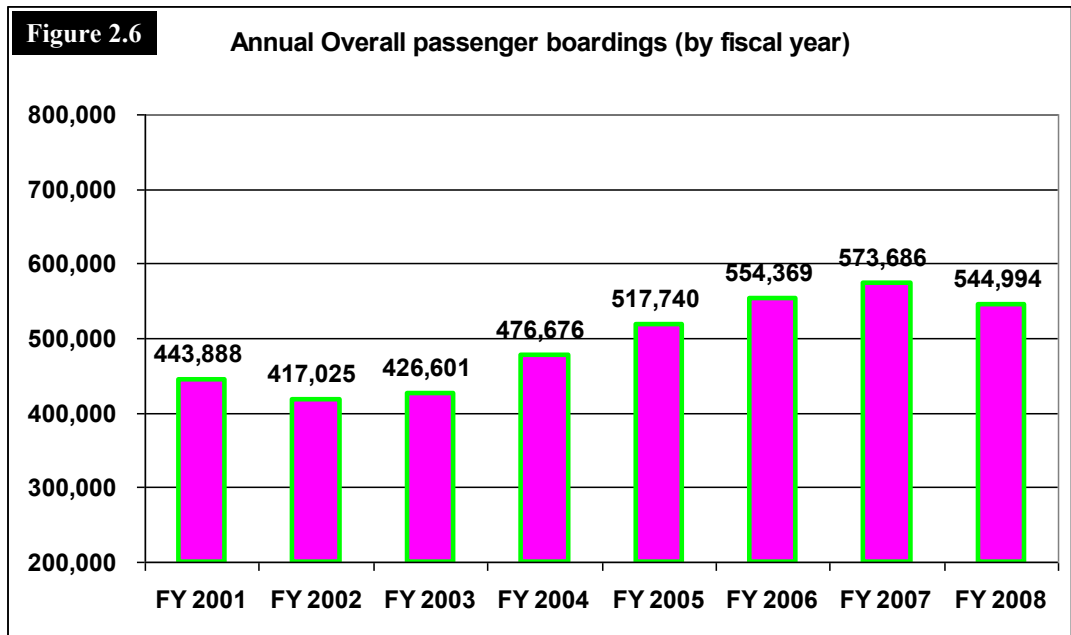
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Even if accounting for a very low estimated people-per-household total of 1.7 for these households (1.0 people less than the average household size), the total population without access to a vehicle in the three counties was over 11,000 at Census 2000. The transportation-dependent population would be significantly increased if analysis included even a small fraction of the people living in one-vehicle households who are limited in vehicle access.

Still, likely the vast majority of transportation dependent don't rely on public transportation for their needs; instead utilizing family, friends, neighbors or co-workers for private transportation. These scenarios cloud a measurement of true demand for public transportation in an area. In the American culture, the overwhelming majority of people prefer private transportation because it's quicker and more desirable. Given people's tight schedules and the predominant city structure based around the car, bus ridership has been waning in most areas of the U.S. for decades. During recent years with ever-escalating gas costs, most areas have seen modest gains in bus ridership. In fiscal 2008, a 12-month period that featured significant gas price increases, overall U.S. bus ridership rose by 2.2 percent from fiscal 2007 according to the American Public Transportation Association.

In several U.S. cities, especially in the Northeast, public transportation is used with regularity by the majority of people. In cities such as New York, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and Boston rail-based public transport is often more timely, practical and thus more desirable than private alternatives.

In South Carolina, largely a rural state, buses and vans are currently the only means of public transportation. Santee Wateree Regional Transportation Authority (SWRTA), the public transportation authority serving Sumter, Lee, Clarendon and Kershaw counties, has taken steps in recent years to increase ridership totals measured by passenger boardings. Figure 2.6 shows the RTA's overall passenger boardings this decade. A passenger boarding – also known in the public transit industry as an “unlinked passenger trip” – is a measurement of every instance when a passenger boards a public transit vehicle.

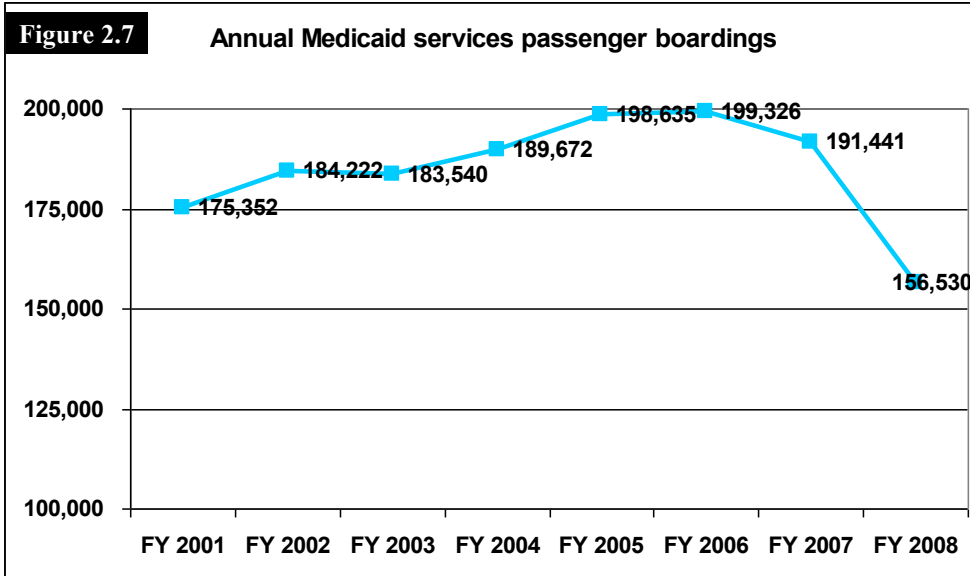


Source: Santee Wateree RTA

As the chart details, overall RTA ridership has increased. The trend of higher annual passenger boardings in recent years is the result of increased contract services other than Medicaid and the expansion of commuter routes for employment transportation. Increases in contract services and commuter routes have offset boarding losses in Medicaid services and fixed route ridership. The 5 percent decrease in fiscal 2008 may be an issue of concern, given overall bus ridership in the U.S. among RTA's of similar size (servicing urbanized areas of less than 100,000 people) grew by 7.6 percent during the year due largely to increased gas prices according to the American Public Transportation Association. As mentioned previously, overall bus ridership in the U.S. among all sized agencies grew by 2.2 percent in fiscal 2008. A key concern for all public transit agencies, both large and small, is maintaining bus ridership levels when gas prices fluctuate downward. Another current critical concern for all agencies is maintaining vehicle, personnel and service levels in a tight-budget environment, given reduced capital funding and higher gasoline operating costs. Generally in the industry, when services decrease ridership also decreases.

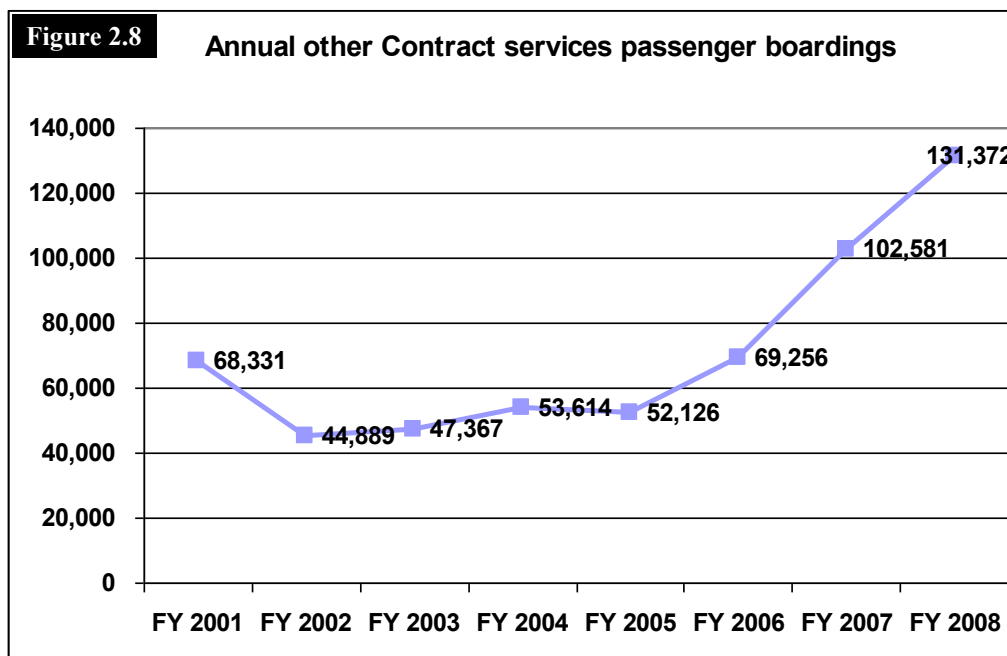
**Ridership for Medicaid and other contract services**

Medicaid and other contract services have traditionally accounted for a significant percentage of Santee Wateree RTA's overall ridership totals. Since the beginning of this decade this percentage has fluctuated between 48 percent and 55 percent of overall passenger boardings according to RTA data. RTA's significant percentages of contract ridership have been previously identified by public transit consultants as an issue of concern. Figure 2.7 shows year-by-year Medicaid passenger boardings this decade. There were increases in Medicaid boardings from fiscal 2001-2006 with a small decline in 2007 and a 35,000 trip decline in 2008. According to RTA, the majority of the 2008 decline was due to the agency being unable to renew services in Berkeley County. More losses in Medicaid ridership are anticipated in the future due to the state entering a brokerage model concept for Medicaid transportation in 2007. In fiscal 2008, Medicaid boardings were 28.7 percent of overall boardings.



Source: Santee Wateree RTA

Figure 2.8 tracks the growth in annual passenger boardings for other contract services. RTA has seen large increases in ridership for these contract services in the last two fiscal years. Historically, RTA provided contract services primarily only in Sumter County and selected portions of Kershaw County; however, in the last few years the authority has expanded contract services to Clarendon, Lee, other parts of Kershaw and even Orangeburg and Calhoun counties. This expansion accounts for the significant increases in passenger boardings.

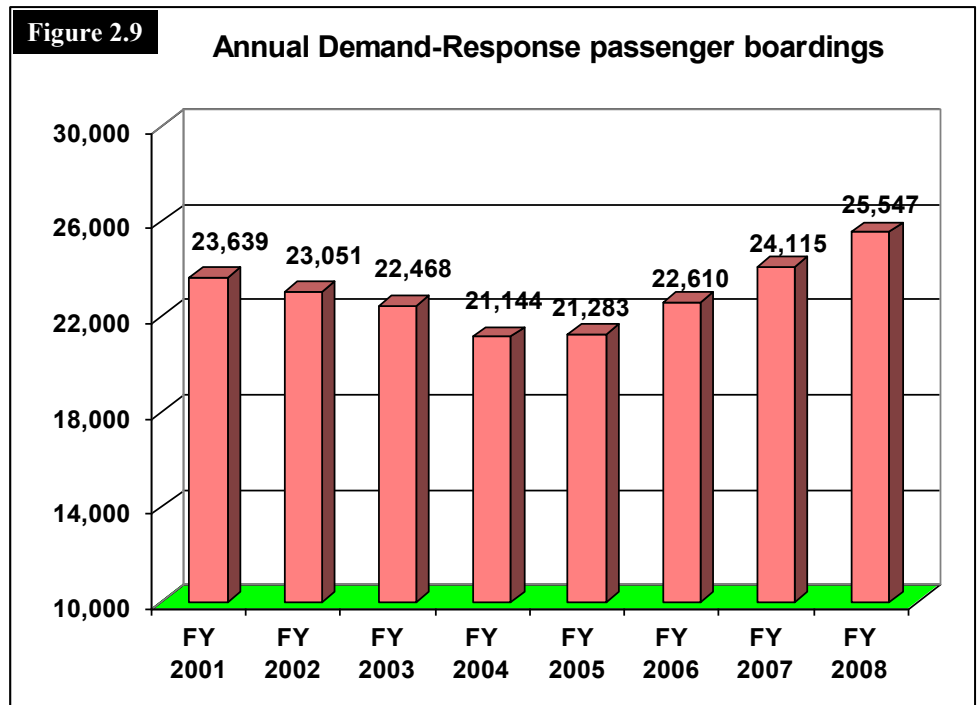


Source: Santee Wateree RTA

### Ridership in rural Sumter County, Clarendon, Kershaw and Lee

In conjunction with Medicaid and other contract services, RTA offers a demand-response option for residents who live in the rural areas of Sumter County not serviced by a fixed route and all residents of Clarendon, Kershaw and Lee counties since no fixed routes are available in those areas. Without fixed-route availability, there is an obvious major gap in the demand for public transit and provided services in these areas. Even though Clarendon and Lee counties are relatively small in population, high percentages of households don't have an available vehicle according to Census 2000 sample estimates. The service gap in rural areas was identified in interviews conducted by consultants URS Corp. and TranSystems for the 2008 Santee-Lynches Regional Transit Plan and also by the Santee-Wateree Mental Health Center and the Total Care for the Homeless Coalition in servicing clients' needs.

The demand-response option in the four counties' rural areas requires a 48-hour advance request to RTA. RTA then determines if a vehicle is available and, if so, fills the request on a space-available basis. The service is available six days per week. The service meets the needs of some rural residents as shown in Figure 2.9, but the majority of those needing transportation rely on other means including private carriers ZIMCO and BNT which require less advance requests. As the chart details, demand-response passenger boardings have shown increases in recent years.



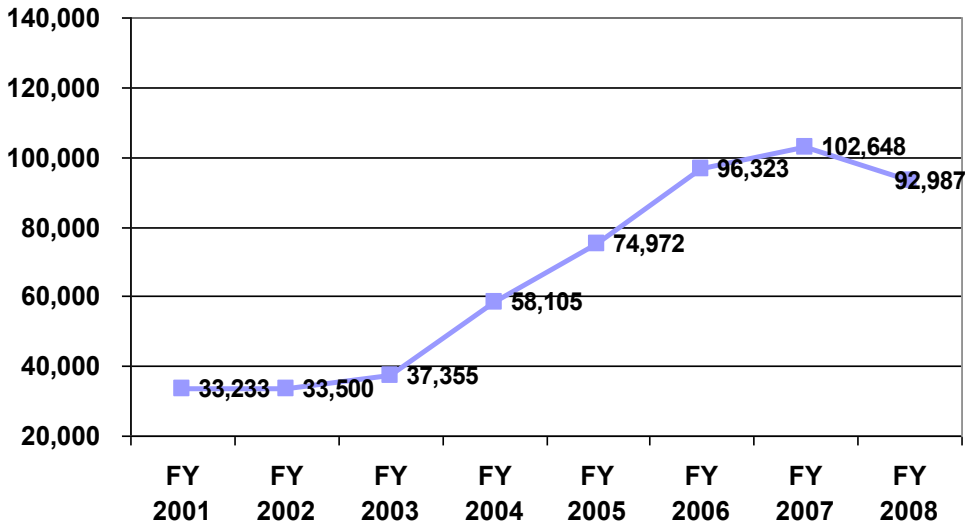
Source: Santee Wateree RTA

A possibility to gain additional ridership in Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee and rural Sumter County and reduce the service gap is for RTA to consider other methods such as "flex routes." One possibility is utilizing contract-service buses in the counties when they're idle to shuttle people to shopping centers or downtown. Census Bureau sample estimates from 2000 showed a combined 2,700 households or about 4,600 people in Clarendon and Lee counties lived without access to a personal vehicle. In Kershaw County, the estimate totals were 1,600 households or about 2,700 people without access to a personal vehicle.

Similar to Sumter County, Clarendon has an aging population though smaller in scale. In 2007, there were an estimated 551 more seniors 75-and-older in Clarendon than in 2000 as is discussed further later in this section. The senior population might be a market for RTA to target in the county.

### Commuter route ridership

A bright spot for RTA this decade has been increases in commuter route ridership, which is largely employment transportation, as shown in Figure 2.10. The current commuter routes include the Myrtle Beach shuttle, which transports Sumter, Lee and Clarendon residents to the beach for work seven days a week; shuttles from Sumter and Camden to Columbia; a Sumter/Eastover to Columbia shuttle; and shuttles from Sumter and Lee counties to INVISTA Corp. in Lugoff.

**Figure 2.10****Annual Commuter route passenger boardings**

Source: Santee Wateree RTA

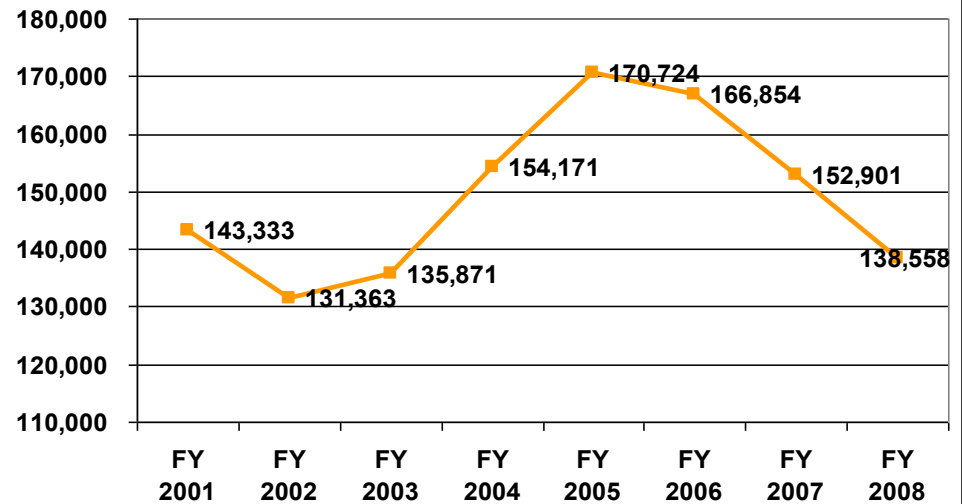
According to RTA, decreases in fiscal 2008 were primarily the result of discontinuing a commuter route to the federal prison in Williamsburg County and also a workforce reduction at INVISTA in Lugoff.

As a result of soaring gas prices since January 2007, RTA's across the U.S. are making increased efforts to provide employment transportation. In recent months Santee Wateree RTA and Santee-Lynches Regional COG have tried to reach more people for employ-

ment transportation via an Internet-based Rideshare program. Many participants in the program are people who haven't traditionally used public transportation. The program offers various options such as car pool, van pool or public transportation for work commuters. Ideally the program will result in increased commuter route ridership since gas prices are prone to escalate significantly, given volatile world markets.

### Ridership in Sumter's urban area

Santee Wateree RTA features seven fixed routes – a scheduled route with identified stops – all of which are in Sumter County's urban area consisting of approximately 64,320 people. According to RTA, some specialized services – special trips for seniors and youth and free public shuttles during special events – have also historically been lumped into the fixed route ridership category since these services occurred in Sumter's urban area. Figure 2.11 shows RTA's fixed route passenger boardings in Sumter this decade.

**Figure 2.11****Annual fixed route passenger boardings in Sumter**

Source: Santee Wateree RTA

After increases earlier in the decade, fixed route ridership has decreased – especially in the last two years. According to RTA, the decreases are mostly due to a reduction in the aforementioned specialized services, which could be perceived as charter services. RTA has been forced to trim these services due to Federal Transportation Administration guidelines.

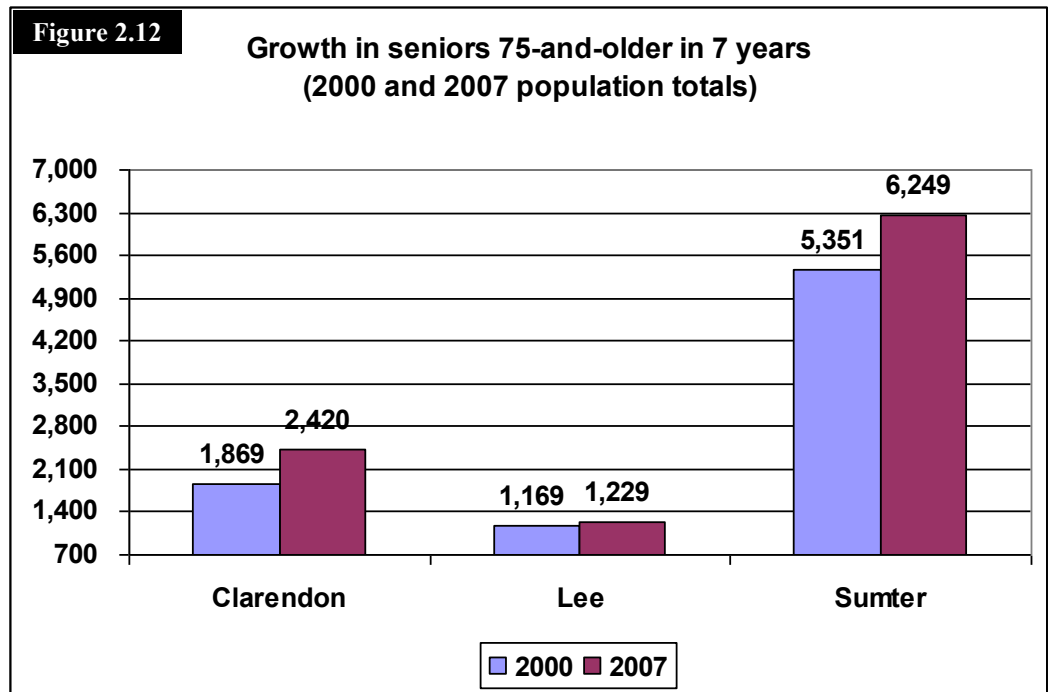
As far as the seven specific fixed routes, some routes have shown increases while others have decreased. The overall trend decrease since fiscal 2006 may be an issue of concern for RTA, since servicing the general public through fixed routes is one of its primary goals.

When analyzing annual fixed route ridership down to a daily per route average, the totals suggest roughly 38 people boarded each fixed route per day of service in fiscal '08. The ridership total is much less than presumed demand for public transportation is when Census 2000 data reveals there are at least an estimated 1,846 households and 3,138 people in Sumter County's urban area without regular access to a vehicle. This transportation-dependent total doesn't even include the likely 4,600-plus households in Sumter's urban area with access to just one vehicle but with possibly multiple family members. Gradually increasing poverty rates in Sumter since 2000 and a rapidly aging population in the county suggest even more people are currently transportation dependent and more ridership potential exists.

Gaps between ridership levels and presumed demand are prevalent in most U.S. cities however, given the aforementioned culture that hasn't emphasized public transportation for decades. The cultural effects have translated to low funding levels that have curtailed ridership growth, according to RTA.

**Possible initiatives to sustain and grow ridership**

Even though our society isn't "public transportation-friendly," various data suggests there is potential for increased fixed route ridership in Sumter. For one, Sumter is an aging community with a growing number of seniors 75-and-older. According to population estimates published by the Census Bureau, there were likely an estimated 500 more seniors 75-and-older in the urban area of Sumter in 2007 as opposed to 2000. For Sumter County overall, there were 898 more seniors in the age category over the seven-year period.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2007 data

Figure 2.12 shows the expansion of the age cohort in all three counties.

Many of these seniors might be unable to drive and could be transportation dependent. Future trends show Sumter County's 75-and-older senior population will continue to expand at a high rate as Baby Boomers age into the cohort. Census Bureau data shows the 70-74 age cohort in Sumter County grew by 597 people from 2,825 to 3,422 during the seven years from 2000-'07.

Growth in Sumter County's senior population 65-and-older due to aging has been one of the fastest-growing cohorts in the county. The cohort grew by an estimated 4,017 people to 13,608 from 1990 to 2007. Given that seniors don't necessarily have the time constraints faced by the working-age population, this population segment might be one focus area RTA targets for increased ridership in the future.

Also contributing to greater potential for future RTA ridership in Sumter is gradually increasing poverty rates and homeless totals through the years. With more poverty, some logic would suggest more people would be dependent on public transportation. Increased gasoline costs could also further enhance RTA ridership since income levels in Sumter are below the state average.

To capture current and future population segments in need of public transportation in Sumter, several possible strategies could be explored by RTA. First, there may be a need to re-evaluate the seven Sumter fixed routes that were established in 1999 and 2000. Since these routes were established, Sumter has seen significant commercial and single-family/multi-family housing development. Transit agencies must keep pace with changes in the community to possibly realign services with community needs.

Next, a re-evaluation of services may also be necessary on the part of RTA. Currently the RTA operates the fixed routes from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Expanding service hours into the evening and implementing weekend service may be necessary to capture industrial shift workers and the growing senior population. Similarly, RTA may want to expand their pre-Christmas holiday shopper shuttle of about four weeks to include weekends throughout the year with the possibility of a Sumter Mall/Wal-Mart shopper shuttle. Other possibilities include extension of the current Shaw Air Force Base shuttle given future planned growth at the base, a downtown trolley service, senior center and community center shuttles, and a hospital patient discharge shuttle.

Third, enhanced public transportation marketing efforts could also be considered by RTA and South Carolina DOT to capture more fixed route ridership potential. According to RTA, effective marketing at the state level could enable the authority to expand ridership and improve upon its perception in the community as merely a social service. Negative perception of public transit was identified as a major challenge/barrier by community leaders in interviews conducted by consultants URS Corp. and Tran-Systems for the 2008 Santee-Lynches Regional Transit Plan.

In regards to increasing ridership, RTA could also attempt to match experience levels with private transportation to reach new customer bases and maintain current ridership.

Next, a comprehensive review of performance measures to ensure they are customer-focused measurements could allow for improved performance and ridership levels.

Finally, given increased fuel costs for RTA, Sumter City and the various county governments should re-evaluate their funding levels to RTA for servicing public transportation in general and specifically the transportation-dependent residents in the counties. Given the likelihood of the growing need for public transportation and the possibility of decreased federal and state funding in the future, a more dedicated funding base will become necessary for the authority to stay in business and enhance service levels, according to RTA.

A combination of all these initiatives could help improve the attractiveness and use of public transit in the urban and rural areas.

# Creating quality educational opportunities for pre-school children, youth and adults

Goal: To provide a complete spectrum of educational opportunities that prepare youth to meet the challenges of the ever-increasing “knowledge economy” and enable the current adult population to remain competitive in the workplace.

Prioritized issues that can be affected by community actions:

- A. *Increase annually the percentage of high school graduates with a diploma*
- B. *Increase the educational/training level of older youth and adults to better meet the current and future needs of industry*
- C. *Expand opportunities for post-secondary education and workforce development*
- D. *Recognize the value of early childhood development for school success and future job readiness*

## Standardized test scores

Fundamental to improving high school graduation rates for students is meeting academic standards in elementary and middle school. Poor achievement in the early years of school leads to student discouragement and a dislike for learning, which are often underlying causes for a person dropping out of high school.

During the last decade both the state and federal government have passed legislation requiring standardized testing of public school students. In South Carolina the main standardized test for elementary and middle school students has been the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT). The test is given annually to students in grades 3 through 8 and covers four subjects – English/ Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies. Students are scored using the following ratings:

<b>PACT</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Below Basic	Not prepared for work at next grade; must have academic assistance plan.
Basic	Minimally prepared for work at the next grade
Proficient	Well prepared for work at the next grade
Advanced	Very well prepared for work at the next grade

Currently a student meets standards on the PACT if he scores Basic or above. A Basic score implies a student is “minimally prepared” for work at the next grade. Table 3.1 shows the percentage of students by district who scored at least Basic or above in English and Math in spring 2008.

**Table 3.1** Percent of students meeting standards by school district on PACT — 2008

Grade	Subject	Lee County	Clarendon Dist. 1	Clarendon Dist. 2	Clarendon Dist. 3	Sumter Dist. 2	Sumter Dist. 17	South Carolina
<b>3</b>	English	62.3	95.2	79.0	87.6	86.2	84.0	86.7
	Math	42.7	72.2	55.4	84.8	73.8	72.4	77.2
<b>4</b>	English	58.1	78.3	85.2	69.3	80.0	77.1	80.8
	Math	52.9	66.7	68.3	73.3	80.8	77.9	79.0
<b>5</b>	English	48.3	65.6	68.4	87.1	77.3	74.8	77.6
	Math	46.4	59.4	64.2	86.2	77.4	76.7	78.0
<b>6</b>	English	37.2	53.6	62.8	71.6	68.4	64.8	74.8
	Math	39.4	56.1	61.2	71.8	69.8	68.0	75.7
<b>7</b>	English	46.8	57.4	60.6	63.0	62.5	67.9	73.0
	Math	59.4	66.2	65.5	78.6	67.7	67.2	77.8
<b>8</b>	English	50.9	67.2	52.8	64.9	60.9	65.3	71.0
	Math	43.0	63.8	62.6	55.0	60.6	63.3	69.7

Source: S.C. Department of Education

**Red** totals indicate less than 60 percent of district students scored Basic or better on PACT.

**Orange** totals indicate district percentage of students scoring Basic or better was over 60 percent but still 10 percent or more below the state average.

Analysis of the data clearly shows students in Lee County and Clarendon Districts 1 and 2 struggle. In only one grade subject (3<sup>rd</sup> grade English) of the 12 total did Lee schools have at least 60 percent of students “minimally prepared” for the next grade according to the state standards in 2008. In that category, 62.3 percent of Lee 3<sup>rd</sup> graders were at least minimally prepared for 4<sup>th</sup> grade English, but the state average was still more than 10 percent higher (86.7 percent).

In four of the 12 grade/subject categories in Clarendon District 1 in 2008, less than 60 percent of students were minimally prepared for work in the next grade. However, this was an improvement from 2007 when less than 60 percent of students were minimally prepared for the next grade in seven of 12 grade/subject categories. Clarendon 2’s totals were slightly better but still had plenty of room for improvement. In 2008, Clarendon 3 was a bright spot with students in five grade/subject categories scoring above the state average on the PACT.

In the two Sumter districts, PACT scores were competitive with state averages in Grades 3 through 5 in 2008. However, a drop-off was apparent in Grades 6-8. This trend also occurred in 2007.

Significant percentages of students failing to meet standards in the middle-school grades often lead to increased high school dropout rates. The percentages show Lee County and Clarendon Districts 1 and 2 have “warning signs ahead” for significant future high school dropouts. Without a high school diploma, these students will have a major disadvantage of finding success in the workplace.

It’s necessary to mention, starting in the 2008-2009 academic year PACT will no longer be administered to the state’s public school students. Changes were necessitated not because of test quality, but instead due to the length of time it took to get test results returned and the lack of feedback for teachers on individual student performance.

### Public school graduation rates

**Table 3.2** Overall eighth grade-to-graduation rate estimates by county

County	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	3-yr. avg.	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	3-yr. avg.	3-yr. avg. hike	2006-2007
Clarendon	54.3%	57.5%	57.5%	56.4%	57.5%	61.3%	62.3%	60.4%	+4.0%	66.4%
Lee	43.5%	50.6%	52.1%	48.4%	45.2%	55.8%	61.7%	54.2%	+5.8%	47.3%
Sumter	53.1%	53.2%	58.8%	55.0%	60.2%	64.7%	66.7%	63.9%	+8.9%	67.2%
STATE	56.8%	57.2%	64.8%	59.5%	60.9%	61.8%	66.2%	63.0%	+3.5%	67.5%

Source: SC Department of Education eighth grade enrollment and diploma data

Research shows the most-effective means of measuring public school graduation rates at this time in the tri-county region is via an eighth grade measurement of enrollment and total diploma counts four academic years later. (All of the public school superintendents in the three counties have agreed that this methodology is likely the most accurate calculation of graduation rates at the present time.) Using the formula, Table 3.2 reveals relatively low graduation rates at the start of this decade with improvement in recent years as the three-year averages indicate. In the most recent academic year, Lee County’s improvement did falter. The table illustrates Sumter’s graduation rate is currently on par with the state average in the mid-60s. The best estimates have the current national graduation rate at about 72.2 percent. As PACT scores revealed previously, Lee and Clarendon counties face significant problems with dropouts.

The percentages listed are best described as “overall graduation rate estimates” and not on-time, four-year, graduation rates. The rates provide realistic estimates of the percentage of eighth graders who graduate from public high schools with a diploma, regardless of the number of years it takes them to finish. Students who earn non-diploma certificates from high school and those who drop out but enter Adult Education and eventually earn a GED are not included in the totals.

Given the increasingly global nature of the economy – with greater overseas accessibility to cheap labor and technological advances requiring fewer, but higher-skilled, workers – every region in the U.S. is becoming more dependent on having access to an educated workforce to be competitive. In the future an ever-increasing number of jobs in the U.S. will require at least some level of post-secondary training. Efforts must be made to continue improvements in public school graduation rates toward the national average and enroll more local students in post-secondary education. Even if a student isn’t college bound, a high school diploma is currently often a requirement for minimum-level entry into the labor market.

### Dropouts or non-diploma recipients

**Table 3.3** Cohort class dropouts or non-diploma recipients by county

County	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	3 class total	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	3 class total	3 class total decrease	2006-2007
Clarendon	237	207	211	655	204	186	186	576	-79	164
Lee	160	116	114	390	136	80	79	295	-95	116
Sumter	698	679	580	1,957	592	480	459	1,531	-426	488
<b>REGION TOTAL</b>	1,095	1,002	905	3,002	932	746	724	2,402	-600	768

Source: SC Department of Education eighth grade enrollment and diploma data

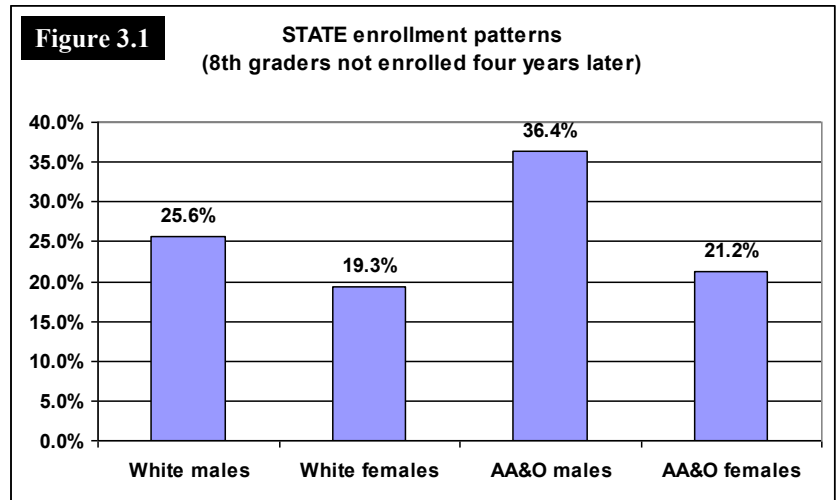
Table 3.3 translates county graduation rates into total numbers of dropouts or non-diploma recipients per cohort class. As county graduation rates have improved in recent years, total dropouts and non-diploma recipients have declined in the region from a three-year total of 3,002 for the first three cohorts to 2,402 in the latter three cohorts. Efforts must be made to build on recent success. If the tri-county region performed at the national average graduation rate of 72.2 percent, there would have been 1,755 dropouts or non-diploma recipients (647 less) in the latter three-year total.

Widespread research indicates high school dropouts face significant challenges in the workplace with the highest levels of unemployment and lowest potential wages if they do obtain employment. Generally as an individual achieves more education beyond high school, he can expect to obtain more job and financial security.

#### Who’s dropping out? — Demographic breakdown of students

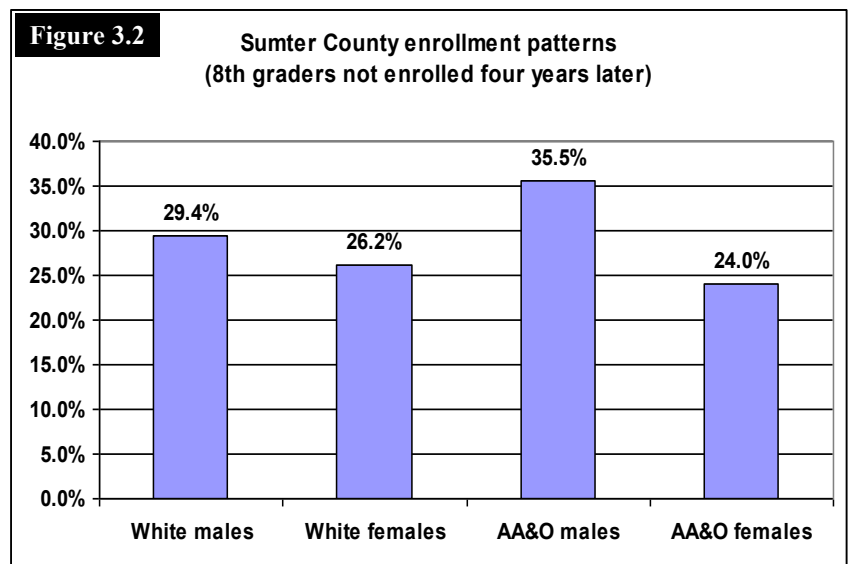
Analysis regarding the race and gender of high school students not earning a state diploma is limited to some extent. The most-effective measurement is to weigh a cohort’s eighth-grade enrollment by race/gender against its 12<sup>th</sup> grade enrollment four years later. This calculation will show total students by race and gender that have left school before graduation. Figure 3.1 provides state percentages of “leavers” by race/gender. As can be seen, minority males in the state drop out of high school at a much higher rate than the three other main demographics. The chart details that during the academic years of 2002-

03, 2003-04, and 2006-07, 36.4 percent of eighth-grade minority males in the state never made it to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. White males followed second at 25.6 percent of eighth graders not advancing through the system. ***The totals would even be a few percent higher if we were able to measure diploma counts by demographic – these percentages listed only reveal those students staying in school.*** Many attribute these high dropout rates to the breakdown of the American family via divorce and out-of-wedlock births contributing to unruly adolescent males.



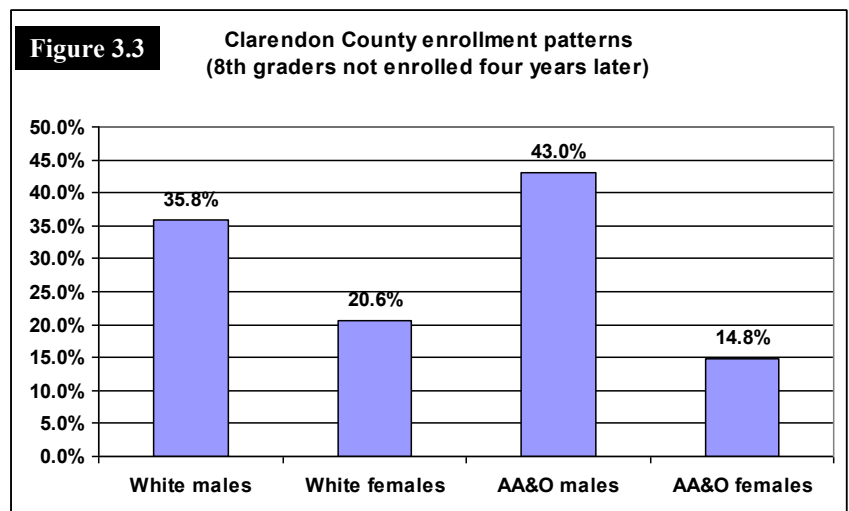
### Sumter County dropouts

Enrollment statistics show that Sumter’s dropout percentages by demographic are very similar to the state average as revealed in Figure 3.2. Minority males comprise the highest percentage at 35.5 percent of eighth graders not advancing to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. White males are next at a 29.4 percent rate, slightly higher than the state average of 25.6 percent. The data from the three academic years showed 26.2 percent of white females leaving high schools in Sumter, compared to the state average of 19.3 percent. Dropout percentages for minority females in Sumter were similar to the state average.



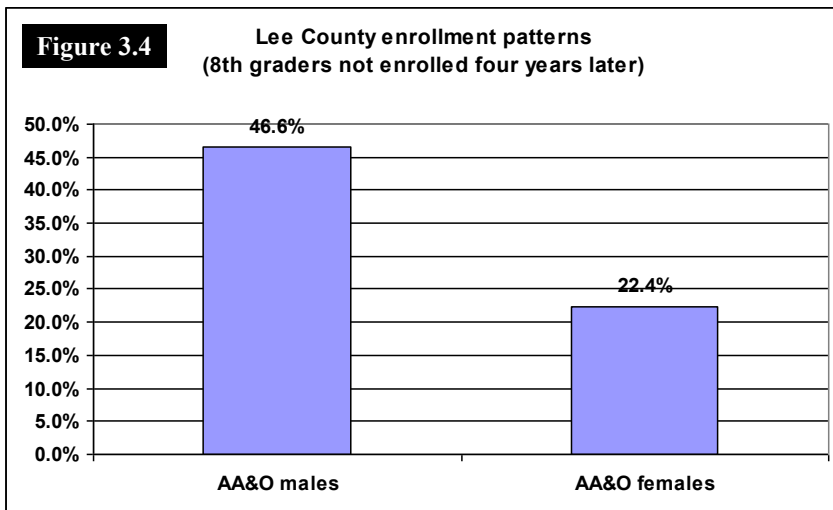
### Clarendon County dropouts

Dropout percentages in Clarendon County were above the state average. For the three years, 43 percent of minority males left high school before finishing the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 6.6 percent above the state average. The percentage of white males dropping out (35.8 percent) was more than 10 percent above the state average. Clarendon has had better success with female students however. The dropout rate for minority females was 14.8 percent, 6.4 percent less than the state. White female dropouts were on par with the state level.



### Lee County dropouts

Demographic analysis of dropouts in Lee County removes white males and females since grade enrollments in these two categories are generally less than 10 students annually. Historically, Lee has the highest dropout rate in the tri-county area and that held true in our analysis. For the three years, 46.6 percent of Lee County minority males left high school before completing the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, a total of 10.2 percent above the state average. Lee minority females dropped out of high school at about the state average.



### Students entering post-secondary education

Table 3.4 shows the percentage of eighth graders by cohort class who entered some form of post-secondary training in the first fall term after when they would have finished high school. For example, an estimated 43.5 percent of Clarendon County eighth graders who were in the graduating class of 2001-02 enrolled in post-secondary training in Fall 2002. (Post-secondary training includes 4-year college, 2-year college, a technical college degree program, a technical college diploma/certificate program and proprietary schools.) The cohort percentages and five-year averages show Clarendon and Sumter counties follow relatively close behind the state average for students entering post-secondary. The U.S. average is likely in the low-50s, or 4 percent to 5 percent above the state average. It's necessary to mention this analysis doesn't include a small percentage of high school graduates who wait to enter post-secondary training more than six months after high school.

**Table 3.4** Eighth graders entering post-secondary directly after high school

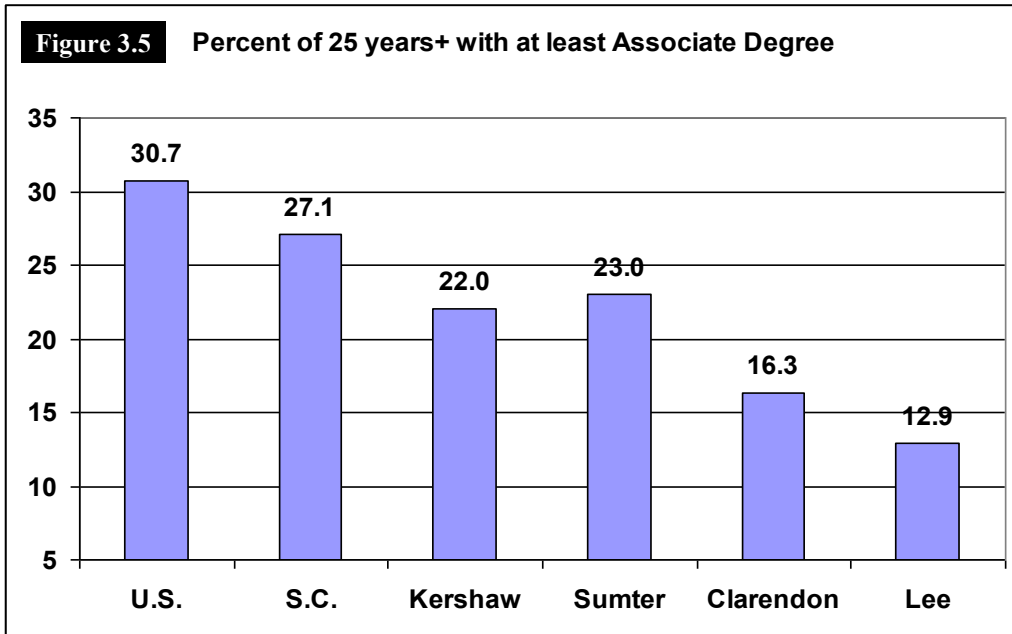
County	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	5-year average
Clarendon	43.5%	43.3%	50.5%	44.5%	43.7%	45.1%
Lee	27.5%	22.8%	12.5%	45.8%	28.0%	26.3%
Sumter	41.3%	43.3%	43.1%	42.6%	47.5%	43.5%
STATE	42.9%	49.8%	46.2%	47.4%	49.7%	47.1%

Source: SC Department of Education eighth grade enrollment totals and College Freshman Report

As mentioned previously, in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century “knowledge economy” an increasing number of jobs will require at least some level of post-secondary education as a prerequisite. Some research groups say up to 85 percent of jobs in 2020 in the U.S. will require post-secondary training. A large percentage of these occupations will be “middle-skill” jobs that generally require some significant education and training beyond high school but less than a bachelor’s degree. Educational training for these “middle-skill” jobs includes associate’s degrees, vocational certificates, significant on-the-job training, previous work experience or generally “some college” but less than a bachelor’s degree.

## Educational attainment levels of adults

The role of education is paramount in the current and future U.S. economy. Given the loss of lower-skilled, lower-wage manufacturing jobs overseas and increasing technological advances requiring fewer but higher-skilled workers, having an educated workforce is critical for retaining and recruiting jobs to an area. Figure 3.5 shows the percentage of adults – 25 years old and older – with at least an associate’s degree in the tri-county area as compared to Kershaw County, the state average and the



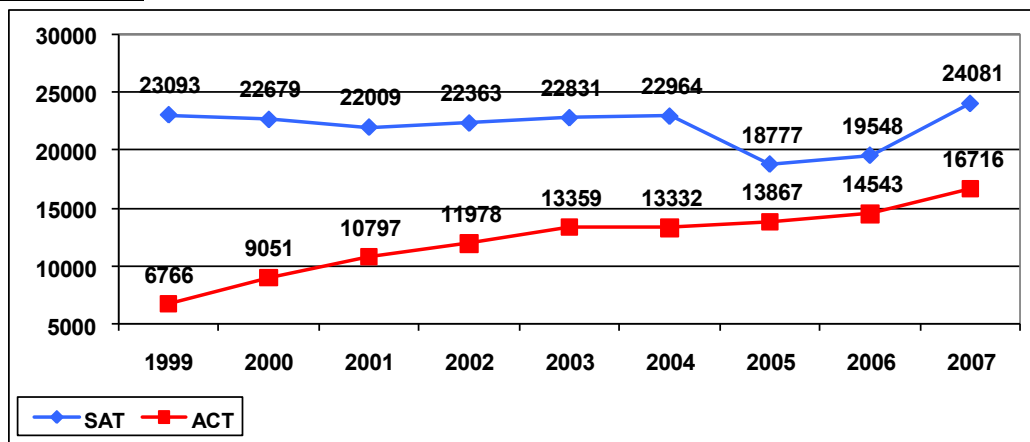
U.S. in 2000 according to the U.S. Census. Sumter County’s 23 percent of adults with at least an associate’s degree leads the region but still falls well behind the state and U.S. Growth in this category is critical for counties, given more and more jobs will require at least middle-skill acquisition as referenced in the previous section.

## College entrance exams

Two specialized tests that students in the state take to qualify for college entry are the SAT and the ACT. The two exams differ in focus with the SAT based more on logic and analysis; while the ACT is a test of curriculum-based and classroom-based achievement.

The SAT is currently the main college entrance exam in 21 states, including South Carolina. In these states at least 50 percent of high school students take the test as the main college entrance exam. The remaining 29 states use the ACT as the main college entrance exam. Although the SAT continues to be the more popular test for college-bound students in the state, the ACT student share has grown through the years as represented in Figure 3.6. The major reason for the shift is that some students feel more comfortable with the curriculum-based ACT. All South Carolina colleges and universities now accept either the SAT or ACT for admission.

**Figure 3.6** SAT participation, ACT participation in state



Source: SC Department of Education

In the tri-county area, slightly more students take the ACT over the SAT. In 2007 the totals were 575 ACT test takers and 484 SAT test takers.

## SAT

Historically, the SAT has been composed of Math and Verbal sections with each having an equal weight of 800 points for a maximum score of 1,600. In 2006, the SAT added a third section for writing that is also scored up to 800 points. However, most analysis of SAT scores still focuses on just the Math and Verbal sections and our analysis does so as well.

Historically, South Carolina has scored among the lowest of any state on the SAT. That trend continued in 2006 and 2007 with a two-year average score of 985, 34 points below the U.S. average of 1,019. In 2007, South Carolina ranked 20<sup>th</sup> of 21 states where at least 50 percent of students took the SAT. Maine was the only state with a lower average score, but it requires **all** high school students take the test as part of a college readiness initiative. South Carolina has somewhat closed the gap on the U.S. average over the last decade as represented by a seven-point increase in its two-year averages but it still hasn't surpassed other states, except Maine. Traditionally, Southern states score lowest on the SAT. A comparison of South Carolina to other states in the South that use the SAT as the main college admissions' exam shows two states – Georgia and Florida – didn't surpass our state by much in scoring in 2007.

**Table 3.5**

**Ranking the Southern States on 2007 SAT**

Rank	State	Composite score
1.	Virginia	1,022
2.	North Carolina	1,004
3.	Maryland	1,002
4.	Florida	993
5.	Georgia	989
6.	<b>South Carolina</b>	<b>984</b>

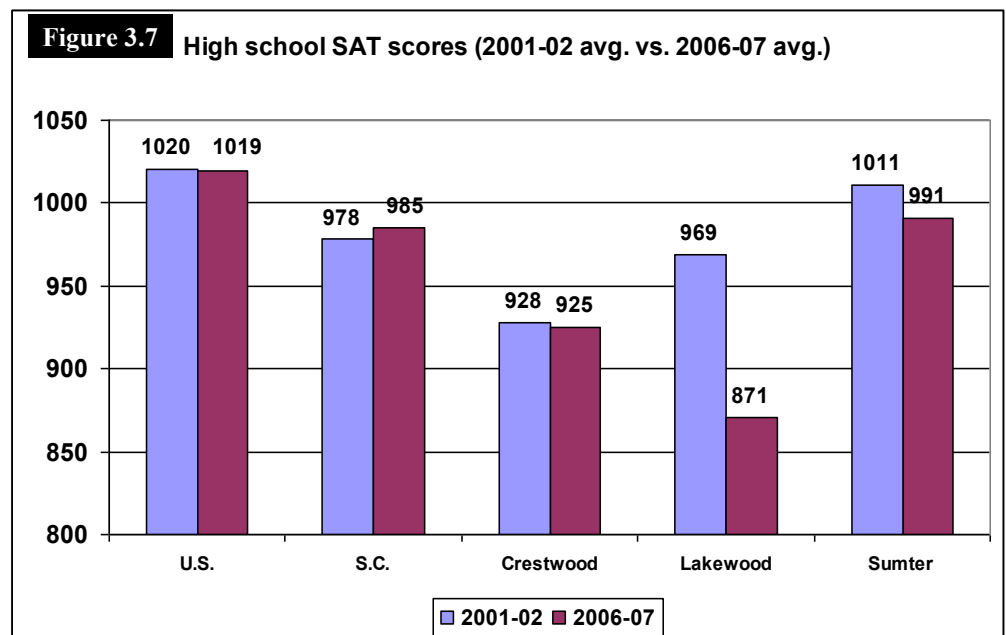
Given the increasing importance of post-secondary education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy, concentrated efforts need to be continued to improve scores in the state to better equip students for college and the future workplace.

Figure 3.7 shows two-year averages for SAT scores from 2001-02 and 2006-07 for the U.S., state and public high schools in Sumter County, the most urban of the three counties in the area.

## SAT scores – Sumter County

Locally, all Sumter County high schools fall below the U.S. average, but Sumter High School's average SAT score has consistently been at or above the state average throughout the decade. At the beginning of the decade, Sumter High's scores were competitive with the U.S. average; however, in recent years the school has seen an average drop of 20 points on the SAT down to 991. In 2007, Sumter High – which is Sumter District 17 – ranked 29<sup>th</sup> of the 85 districts in the state on the test.

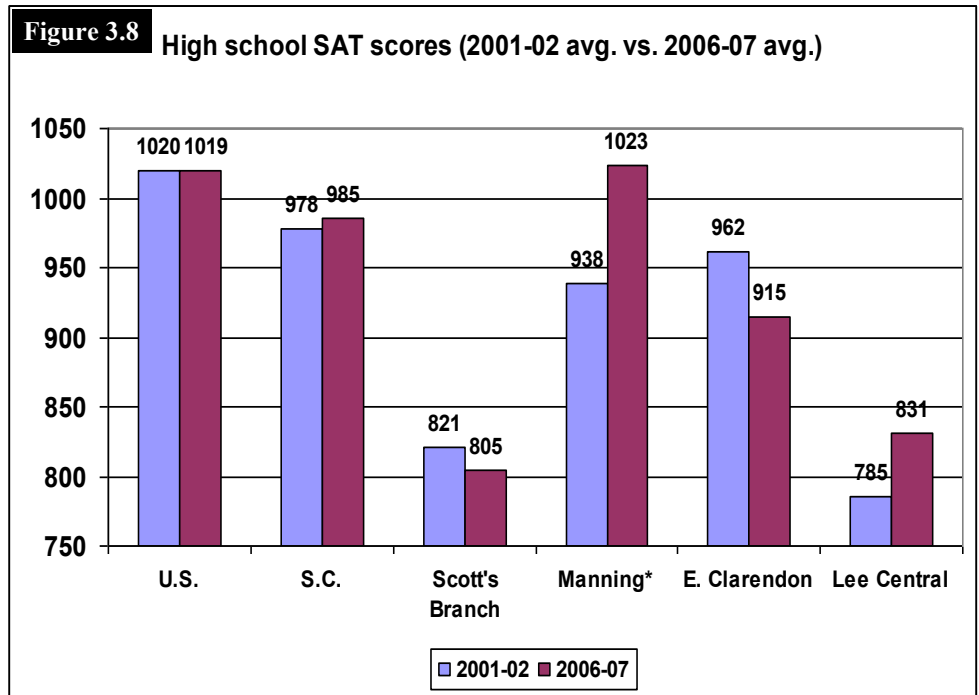
**Figure 3.7** High school SAT scores (2001-02 avg. vs. 2006-07 avg.)



Crestwood and Lakewood high schools' scores fall below Sumter High and the state average. Crestwood's SAT score has been fairly stable in the lower 900s over the decade while Lakewood has seen its scores fall.

### SAT scores – Clarendon and Lee counties

U.S. and state SAT scores are compared to the two more rural counties in the area in Figure 3.8. Lee Central and Scott's Branch high schools score similarly, both significantly below the state average. Lee Central has shown improvement since the beginning of the decade when its scores were below 800. Scott's Branch's scores have averaged in the lower 800s. In 2007, Lee Central – which is the Lee County School District -- ranked 77<sup>th</sup> of 85 districts in the state on the SAT with an 815 score; while Clarendon District 1 (Scott's Branch) was 83<sup>rd</sup> with a 772.



\* In 2006 and '07 only 8% of Manning High students took the SAT

East Clarendon High School achieved scores in the mid-900s from 2001-06 before faltering in 2007 with a student body average score of 874, which brought its two-year average down to 915. Manning High School's scores have increased substantially since the beginning of the decade but the percentage of students taking the SAT has dropped considerably from about 30 percent to 8 percent in 2006 and 2007. Data shows the percentage of ACT test-takers at Manning has increased somewhat in recent years but unfortunately not enough to make up the difference.

Lee and Clarendon counties' scores reveal much work is necessary to improve the college readiness of children.

### ACT

The ACT is a college entrance exam that consists of four subject-area tests: English, Math, Reading and Science Reasoning. The test uses an adjusted average of the four subject tests to arrive at an overall composite score. The highest score for each of the tests and the overall composite is 36.

Similar to the SAT, South Carolina scores near the bottom of all states on the ACT. During the three years from 2005-07 the state ranked 49<sup>th</sup> of the 50 states, only surpassing Mississippi each year. It should be mentioned however that Mississippi has a participation rate of over 90 percent, which naturally drives down scores significantly. South Carolina's participation rate increased from 38 percent to 43 percent over the three-year period.

In 2007 the U.S. average ACT score was 21.2; while South Carolina earned a 19.6. For comparison purposes, one-tenth of a point on the ACT is equivalent to four SAT points. This means if the ACT were scored like the SAT in 2007, South Carolina's average would be 64 points below the U.S. mean. Also like the SAT, Southern states generally score lowest. Of the 10 states in the Southeast, South Carolina ranked ninth in 2007 – above only Mississippi.

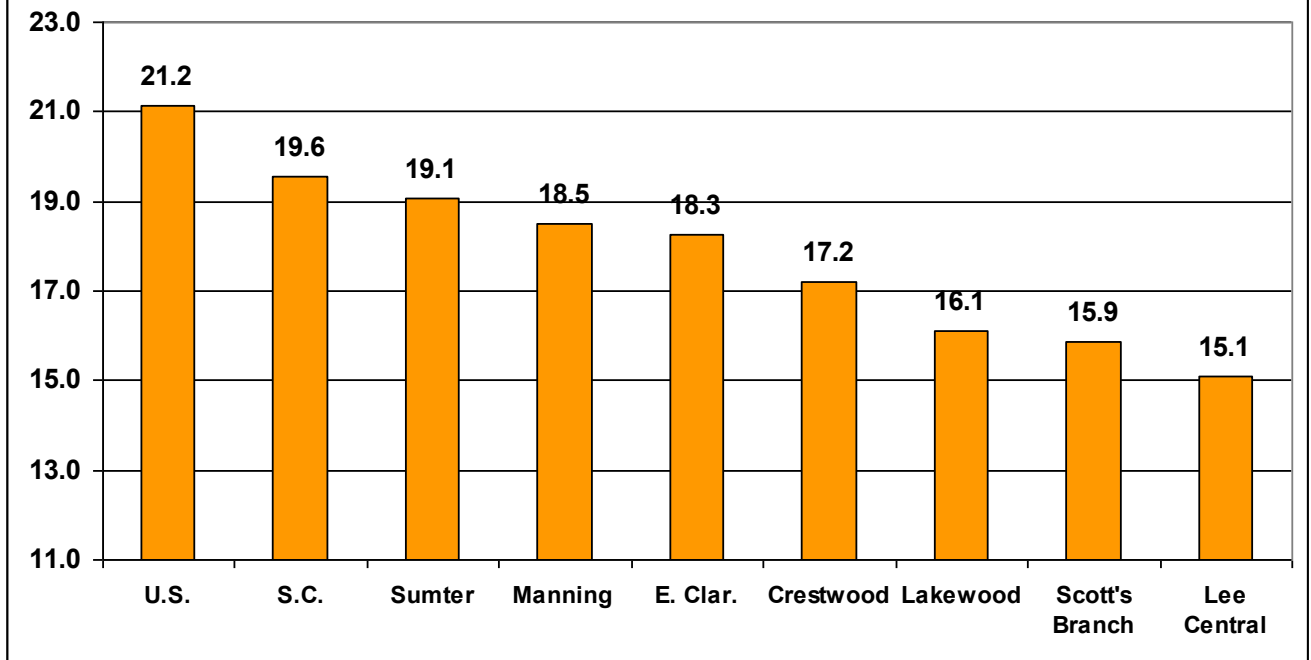
**Figure 3.9****High school ACT composite scores (Two-year averages of 2006-07)**

Figure 3.9 compares local high school ACT scores to the state and U.S. averages using two-year average scores from 2006 and 2007. Local scoring trends were similar to the SAT. During the two years only Sumter High had ACT scores that were somewhat competitive with the state average of 19.6. All schools locally had fairly strong levels of test participation during the two years measured.

In 2007, Lee County School District's average ACT score of 14.9 ranked 82<sup>nd</sup> of 85 districts in the state. Clarendon District 1 (Scott's Branch) was 77<sup>th</sup> with a 15.6. Sumter District 2, consisting of Crestwood and Lakewood high schools, ranked 70<sup>th</sup> of 85 districts primarily because of low performance by Lakewood.

**Table 3.6** 2007 ACT scores by subject area – U.S., S.C., and local high schools

Group	English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
U.S.	20.7	21.0	21.5	21.0	21.2
<b>BENCHMARK</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>24.0</b>	
S.C.	19.0	19.8	19.8	19.5	19.6
Sumter High	18.6	18.4	19.0	19.0	18.9
Manning High	18.0	18.3	18.3	18.7	18.4
East Clarendon	17.7	17.5	17.9	16.3	17.4
Crestwood	15.8	17.4	16.8	17.9	17.1
Lakewood	15.1	17.0	15.9	16.8	16.4
Scott's Branch	13.9	16.2	15.0	16.5	15.6
Lee Central	13.7	15.8	14.8	15.0	14.9

Source: S.C. Department of Education

ACT also reports College Readiness Benchmark Scores as shown in Table 3.6, which are the minimum scores needed on an ACT subject-area test to indicate a 75 percent chance of obtaining a “C” or higher in the corresponding college courses – English composition, Algebra, Social Science and Biology. ACT asserts these scores are empirically derived based on the actual performance of students in college. According to ACT, a student with lower scores “may need additional academic preparation to be successful in the typical college entry-level courses.” The high school scores clearly show that the majority of students in the state and the local area are not adequately prepared to achieve success in college.

Analysis of the state’s ACT scores is also conducted by race. In 2007, white high school graduates in the state had an average composite score of 21.5 as shown in Table 3.7; while African-American students scored a 16.3, representing a 0.1 point drop from 2006.

A total of 61 percent of state students who took the ACT in 2007 took the core academic courses recommended by ACT and had an average score of 20.1. State test-takers who didn’t take the core courses, 39 percent, averaged an 18.5. **Interestingly, white students who didn’t take the core courses still scored significantly higher than African-American students who did: 20.9 for whites taking less than core and 16.9 for African Americans who took the core classes. This trend was also apparent at the national level but not quite as severe: 20.7 for white students taking less than core and 17.7 for African Americans taking core courses. ACT officials attribute these gaps to a variety of factors, in particular “rigor of courses,”** which can’t be measured with the self-reporting used to determine who has taken core courses. The ACT’s recommended core courses include the following:

- 4 years of English
- 3 or more years of math, including Algebra I and II and Geometry
- 3 or more years of social studies, including U.S. history and government and world history
- 3 or more years of natural sciences, such as general, physical and earth science, biology, chemistry and physics

**Table 3.7 2007 ACT composite scores**

Group	Overall average	Taking Core or more courses	Taking less than Core
U.S.	21.2	22.0	19.8
S.C.	19.6	20.1	18.5
S.C. White	21.5	21.9	<b>20.9</b>
S.C. African American	16.3	<b>16.9</b>	15.3

In summary, despite a continuing preference among local high school students for the ACT over the SAT, scores in many high schools -- specifically Lee Central, Scott’s Branch and Lakewood -- are extremely low compared to the state average. Given the state composite score ranks 49<sup>th</sup> of 50 states, these high schools’ scores draw attention to the fact that much intervention is necessary to better prepare these students for college and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy. Unless a larger percentage of high school graduates have the academic foundation for success in college coursework, the local area’s future ability to compete economically will be seriously degraded.

### Young children in low-income families

Over the past decade research has confirmed the importance of early child care and educational experiences. Children develop at a tremendous rate during their first few years of life and high quality care and education during these critical years foster successful mental growth.

There is a direct correlation between a child from a low-income family and that child's lack of readiness for school. A large percentage of economically disadvantaged children live in single-parent families headed by the mother. National data shows two of every three single moms with children 5 or younger work and therefore can't effectively contribute to the child's care and learning during formative years. When statistics show roughly 40 percent of all children in Lee and Clarendon counties are in single-parent families, there is reason for alarm. Sumter's rate of 34 percent of children in single-parent families was about 3 percent greater than the state average of 31.3 percent.

Despite some improvement in poverty rates over the last 30 years, rural counties in the South still face markedly higher poverty and lower-income levels than urban areas. The poverty level is below an income cutoff or threshold, where a family needs public money and service to subsist. The threshold varies based on family size and number of children under 18 years old. If a family's total income is less than the threshold, then the family is considered below the poverty level. Examples of poverty thresholds from Census 2000 were the following:

<b>Family size &amp; composition</b>	<b>Income threshold</b>
Three people (one child under 18)	\$13,410
Four people (two children under 18)	\$16,895
Five people (three children under 18)	\$19,882

Sumter, Lee and Clarendon counties have family poverty rates that exceed the state average as evidenced in the next chart from Census 2000. Family poverty is especially prevalent among minority populations in the tri-county area. Poverty rate estimates for Hispanics in 2000 were likely difficult to gauge in the three counties due to a small relative population at the time in comparison to more metropolitan areas of the state.

**Table 3.8 Families below poverty level by race -- 2000**

	<b>STATE</b>	<b>Clarendon</b>	<b>Lee</b>	<b>Sumter</b>
Overall family poverty rate	10.7%	18.7%	17.7%	13.1%
White	5.6%	7.4%	2.1%	5.1%
African American	23.5%	29.9%	27.8%	22.9%
Hispanic	20.3%	35.1%	17.7%	23.5%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000 (latest available data for poverty by race)

The data shows that close to 30 percent of African-American families in Clarendon and Lee were in poverty in 2000, which presents extra risks for children.

Another level of data calculates the number of children 17-and-under in poverty by county. According to the Census Bureau's Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates, poverty rates are gradually rising throughout the state since 2000. (The Census 2000 poverty thresholds listed previously are also adjusted slightly annually for people to be considered in poverty.) According to 2004 estimates, there were 11,017 tri-county children in poverty out of a collective total of 42,258 for a rate of 26.1 percent. The county breakdowns are listed in Table 3.9.

**Table 3.9 Children 17-and-under in poverty – 2004 estimates**

<b>County</b>	<b>Youth in poverty</b>	<b>Total youth</b>	<b>Poverty rate</b>
Clarendon	2,463	8,012	30.7%
Lee	1,389	4,942	28.1%
Sumter	7,165	29,304	24.5%
<b>Tri-county</b>	<b>11,017</b>	<b>42,258</b>	<b>26.1%</b>
<b>STATE</b>	<b>217,509</b>	<b>1,025,986</b>	<b>21.2%</b>

Source: Census Bureau Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates, 2004

A final level of data shows the percentage of children 5-and-under living in “severe poverty,” where total income is less than half of the poverty threshold. According to Census 2000 statistics, there were nearly 1,700 children 5-and-under in the tri-county area in severe poverty. The breakdown by county is shown at right.

**Table 3.10**

**Children 5-and-under living in severe poverty -- 2000**

Clarendon	Lee	Sumter	Tri-county total
392	130	1,164	1,686

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

It’s necessary to mention these statistics likely don’t completely capture county poverty levels since poverty is somewhat difficult for the Census Bureau to measure, given many impoverished families live with relatives or in a shelter and are not contained to a particular household. Census Bureau measurements are generally more precise when poverty is less and more families live in households with their own address.

Still, the data establishes the tri-county area has a large number of school-age children and preschoolers living in economic distress. The state has enacted legislation to better prepare young children for the first grade through the establishment of mandatory, full-day, 5-year-old kindergarten for every child in public school.

Given the many circumstances that force mothers with young children to work more -- including divorce, minimal or flat wages, and loss of paternal employment among others -- ensuring quality child care is critical. Yet families in rural areas, such as Clarendon and Lee counties, generally have fewer child care choices than urban families, with center-based care more scarce than in urban areas according to research. Beset with these conditions, it’s important that working parents in rural counties have greater access to high-quality child care and early education programs for their preschoolers. Many believe state and federal policy should focus on ensuring all rural preschoolers’ early learning experiences prepare them for future school success.

Current efforts are being made to expand and upgrade existing 4-year-old kindergarten pre-school programs in the state to serve all children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. *The Economic Benefits Of Pre-School In South Carolina*, a study released in March 2008 by the S.C. Commission for Minority Affairs, recommended increasing state funding for 4K to improve the quality of current programs. Also the study asserted 4K needs to be expanded in the state to serve an additional 11,500 children from disadvantaged backgrounds who are not currently being served. The study recommended these changes would increase annual pre-school spending in the state from \$97 million to \$269 million, a hike of \$172 million. The long-term benefits from pre-school investment would be \$326 million annually – in the form of higher government revenues and lower spending – according to the study.

**South Carolina Readiness Assessment (SCRA)**

Since 2001 public schools in the state have administered the South Carolina Readiness Assessment (SCRA) to assess kindergarteners on three indicators: Personal and Social Development, and Math and English/Language Arts knowledge and skills tied to the state academic standards. The SCRA relies on teacher observation and documentation. The assessments show the percentage of kindergarteners who consistently demonstrate readiness for first grade. Table 3.11 displays percentages of kindergarteners in 2007 assessed as not consistently demonstrating readiness for first grade according to the SCRA.

**Table 3.11** Kindergartners not consistently ready for first grade (SCRA -- 2007)

Student type	Clarendon	Lee	Sumter	STATE
White males	30.3%	N/A	31.0%	22.2%
White females	11.9%	N/A	20.1%	13.7%
Minority males	38.0%	37.7%	35.6%	35.8%
Minority females	23.1%	30.6%	22.3%	25.2%

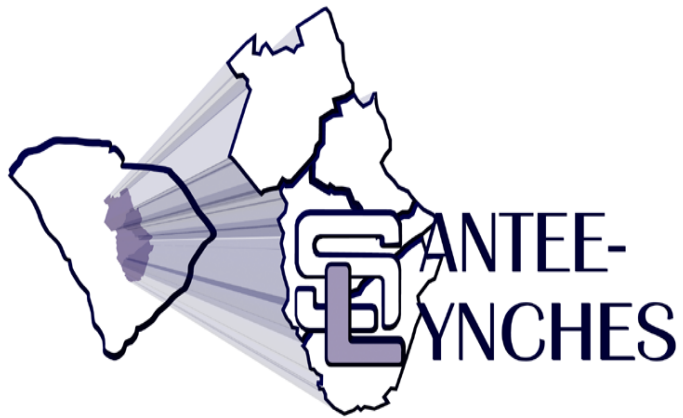
Source: S.C. Kids Count from S.C. Department of Education totals

The most apparent trend from the SCRA is the relatively high percentage of minority males who have reached school age without the readiness skills needed for success in learning. In Lee County the data reveals about one of every three kindergartners don't consistently show readiness for first grade. In Clarendon and Sumter counties, roughly 28 percent of kindergartners are not ready for school. The state average is about 25 percent, or one in four kindergartners, not showing school readiness.

Moreover, according to S.C. Kids Count Project Director Dr. Baron Holmes and others, some elementary schools are not ready to respond appropriately to the varying developmental levels of children. As a result, too many students don't experience the success needed in the early grades to create the proper motivation and engagement to sustain learning.

The data indicates the state needs to continue the process of expanding and upgrading existing 4-year-old kindergarten preschool programs to serve all children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Additionally, federally funded Head Start programs need to be expanded for younger, low-income children.

Locally, many child-care providers in the tri-county area that work with children 5-and-under are at low levels in the state certification process. The state has four levels of certification standards for child-care providers – Registered, Licensed, ABC and Accredited. The United Way's Success by 6 program tries to help and train these providers to move up the certification scale. According to the United Way, a lack of funding is a critical issue facing most lower-quality child-care providers in the area.



United Way  
of Sumter, Clarendon  
and Lee Counties

# Economic development, jobs and civic engagement

Goal: To stimulate growth of the area's economy by recruiting more technology-related business and industry with the result being higher-paying jobs and improved quality of life for residents.

Prioritized issues that can be affected by community actions:

- A. *Increase the number of new jobs — both manufacturing and non-manufacturing*
- B. *Improve individual income measures*
- C. *Encourage civic engagement that attracts business investors*

## Employment levels

**Table 4.1** County employment changes – 2000 through 2007

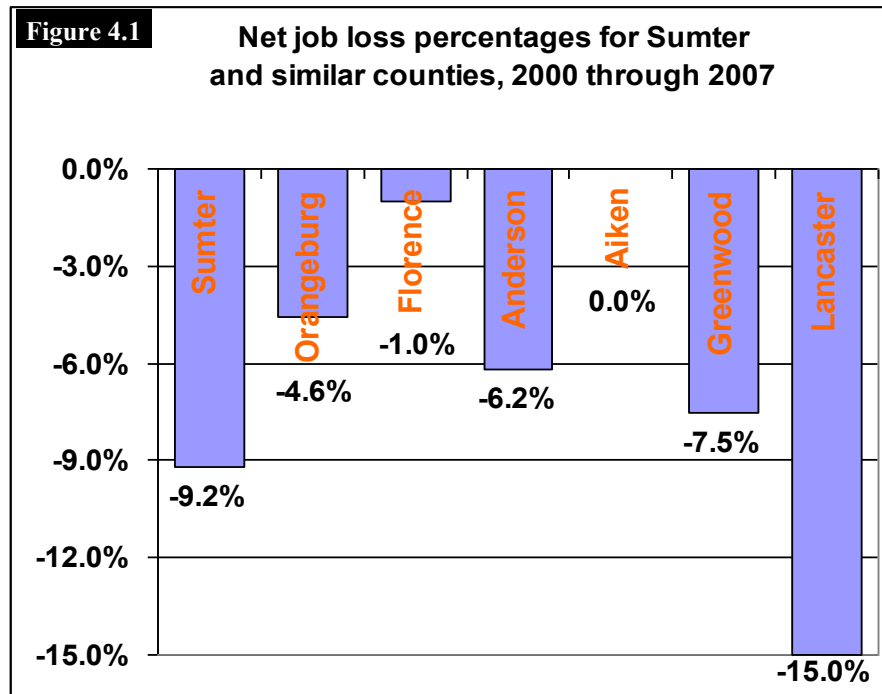
County	Manufacturing		Non-manufacturing		Total jobs		% change in total jobs
	2000	2007	2000	2007	2000	2007	
Clarendon	1,646	978	5,994	6,883	7,640	7,861	+2.9%
Lee	459	419	3,584	3,379	4,043	3,798	(-6.1%)
Sumter	12,685	7,902	29,018	29,959	41,703	37,861	(-9.2%)
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>14,790</b>	<b>9,299</b>	<b>38,596</b>	<b>40,221</b>	<b>53,386</b>	<b>49,520</b>	<b>(-7.2%)</b>

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2000-07 annual data

An area's level of employment is a major indicator of its economic viability. Table 4.1 shows average annual job levels since 2000 in each of the three counties according to the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), which is considered the most reliable source of employment information. These are actual jobs located within the three counties and exclude residents who commute outside the tri-county area for work. QCEW jobs data covers about 98 percent of all non-agricultural and non-military jobs in the U.S.; **so, the approximate 6,100 active-duty personnel at Shaw Air Force Base wouldn't be included in the totals.**

The data shows the significant loss of manufacturing jobs since 2000 in the three counties and more specifically Sumter County, the tri-county's industrial center. A total of 5,491 manufacturing jobs were lost in the three counties from 2000 through 2007. Sumter County lost 4,783 of these jobs, or 87 percent, in the timeframe. The majority of the losses have been lower-skilled, lower-wage manufacturing jobs that have moved offshore in the ever-increasing global economy. Some manufacturing losses are also due to technological advances that necessitate fewer workers. The tri-county area, like other rural parts of South Carolina and the Southeast, has traditionally depended on the lower-skilled, lower-wage manufacturing sector for its economic livelihood for decades. Many rural regions across the Southeast are facing similar dilemmas. The data clearly shows the tri-county region has struggled to effectively handle the transitioning of the economy and offset manufacturing losses with substantive gains in other employment sectors. Lower-skilled, lower-wage manufacturing job losses are expected to continue to decline throughout the U.S. According to Sumter Development Board staff, the current base of county manufacturing jobs will continue to decline in the years to come.

Figure 4.1 presents Sumter County's cumulative job losses since 2000 compared to like counties in the state according to QCEW. As the chart reveals all of the comparable counties have been impacted by globalization and the loss the lower-skilled, lower-wage manufacturing jobs as represented by negative overall job growth – or zero growth as in the case of Aiken. However, Sumter, Greenwood and Lancaster counties have been especially hurt because of their traditional dependence on that sector for their economic livelihood. In all three counties more than 30 percent of all jobs in 2000 were in manufacturing. Florence and Aiken counties were much better positioned for the transitioning of the economy in 2000 with manufacturing levels on par with the state average of 18.9 percent at the time. Therefore, these counties were better able to weather the loss of manufacturing jobs since they had more diversified economies. Anderson County (29.6 percent) had a manufacturing level closely behind Sumter and Lancaster in 2000, but it has been better able to offset losses with gains in other sectors. A review of the various counties' manufacturing levels in 2000 and ensuing net job loss percentages through 2007 is



provided in Table 4.2 and clearly shows those counties with the highest concentrations of manufacturing have taken the biggest employment hits. To remedy these losses, Sumter and other traditional manufacturing counties must further diversify their economies in part through increased education and training.

**Table 4.2** Manufacturing dependence, net job losses – 2000-'07

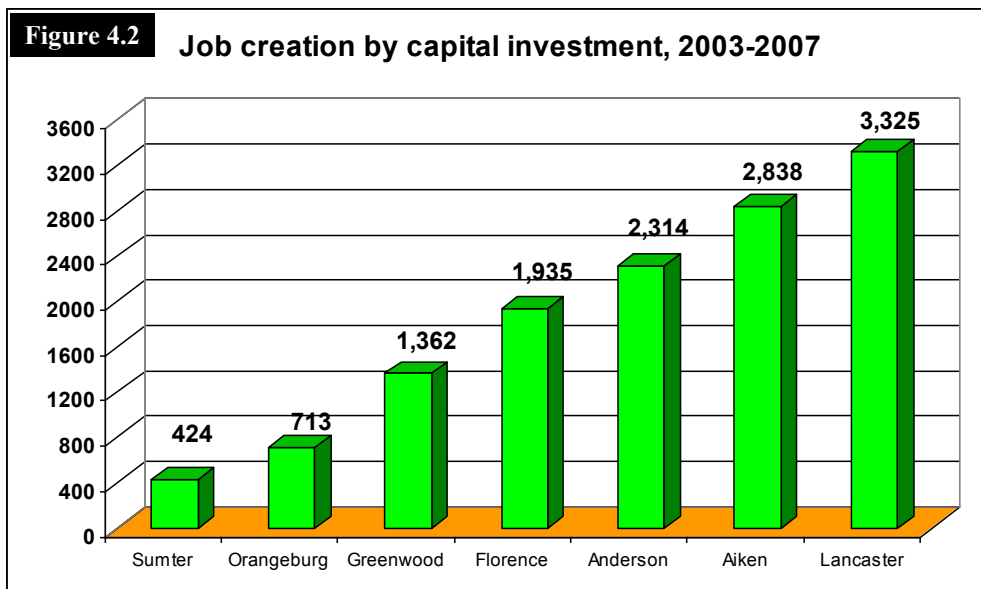
County	Manufacturing dependence in 2000	Total overall job loss from 2000-'07
Lancaster	34.4%	-15.0%
Greenwood	33.5%	-7.5%
<b>Sumter</b>	<b>30.4%</b>	<b>-9.2%</b>
Anderson	29.6%	-6.2%
Orangeburg	25.4%	-4.6%
STATE	18.9%	+3.7%
Florence	18.2%	-1.0%
Aiken	16.9%	0.0%

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

### Job creation by capital investment, 2003-2007

Another measure of county employment trends is to measure job creation as a result of capital investment by industries. The state Department of Commerce tracks county-level capital investment projects that the agency is involved in. Figure 4.2 shows job creation announcements via new industries or expansions for Sumter and comparable counties in the state in the five years from 2003-'07. Typically an industry has at most a five-year window to bring jobs on board. Sumter County had only 424 job creation announcements through Department of Commerce projects for the five-year period, a total well below the other counties. These totals represent a large majority of job creation announcements per county but not all of them because at times a company may expand without involving the Department of Commerce.

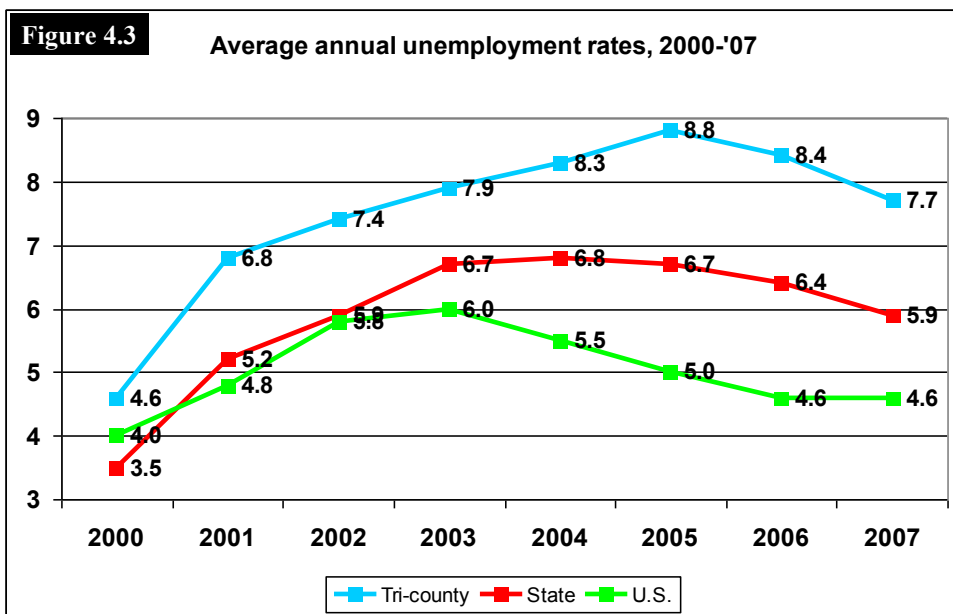
Regardless of some adjustments in the counts, the totals are disturbing for Sumter. The totals again call for the need for the county to expand the skill level of its workforce and effectively address quality of life issues covered in other sections of this report in order to attract more industry to the area.



### Annual unemployment rates

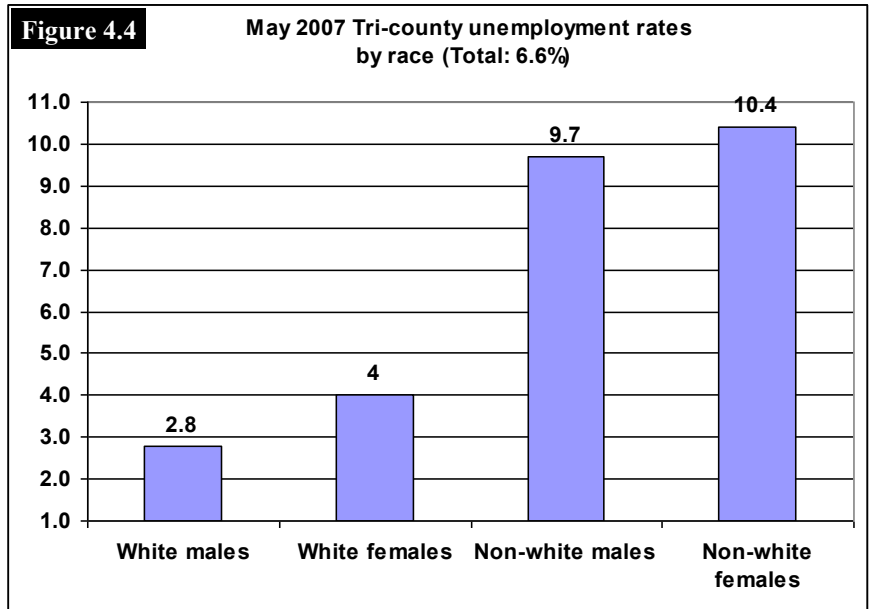
With a weakening job picture in the tri-county area since 2000, the unemployment rate has increased. While there is no formula for a reasonable level of unemployment, an acceptable unemployment rate is generally the state average.

While the tri-county, state and U.S. unemployment rates have all increased since 2000 as shown in Figure 4.3, the local area's unemployment has grown at a faster rate. Five consecutive years of rising rates in the first half of the decade caused the area's unemployment rate to peak in 2005 at 8.8 percent before falling in 2006 to 8.4 percent. In 2007 the rate fell again, but statistics show this was not the result of adding jobs but unemployed workers giving up on searching for work and dropping out of the labor force.



As mentioned previously, the key reason for higher unemployment in the tri-county area through the years is the loss of lower-skilled, lower-wage manufacturing jobs offshore in the ever-increasing global economy. Some manufacturing job losses are also due to technological advances that necessitate fewer workers. The tri-county area, like other rural parts of South Carolina and the Southeast, has traditionally depended on the lower-skilled, lower-wage manufacturing sector for its economic livelihood for decades.

Figure 4.4 goes inside the tri-county's unemployment rate to measure it by race and gender. This measurement – published by the state Employment Security Commission – applies unemployment percentages generated by Census 2000 to county labor force totals. The Employment Security Commission tracks unemployment by race and gender for selected months out of the year. May 2007 is provided in the accompanying chart. For that month, the tri-county unemployment rate was 6.6 percent. The unemployment rate among whites was 3.4 percent; while the rate for non-whites was basically three times larger at 10.0 percent. The state Employment Security Commission emphasizes these percentages are “loose estimates” based on Census 2000 employment trends, but the overall trends are alarming and necessitate intervention among the African-American population to increase educational and skill levels.



### Commuting patterns

Unlike the previous QCEW analysis of jobs specifically in a county, unemployment statistics are based on a worker's residence; so a resident could lose his job in his home county via a plant closure but commute to a county with a better overall job base for work and still be counted as an employed worker in his home county even though he lost his job there. This would be a preferred scenario for counties suffering overall job losses to maintain and grow population and might be the case in some suburban counties in the state that are similar to Sumter County in size. However, worker-commuting patterns data shows total work commuters from Sumter to outlying counties has not necessarily grown in recent years as the manufacturing job base within Sumter County has continued to decrease.

Local Employment Dynamics data from the U.S. Census Bureau for years 2002-'06 shows no trend increases in Sumter residents commuting for work to neighboring counties, including Richland and Florence as Table 4.3 reveals. This is likely because Sumter is a fairly isolated county with limited interstate access compared to some suburban counties in the state. These trends support flat annual county population estimates for Sumter through recent years as is discussed in the next sub-section.

**Table 4.3** Sumter work commuters to neighboring counties, 2002-'06

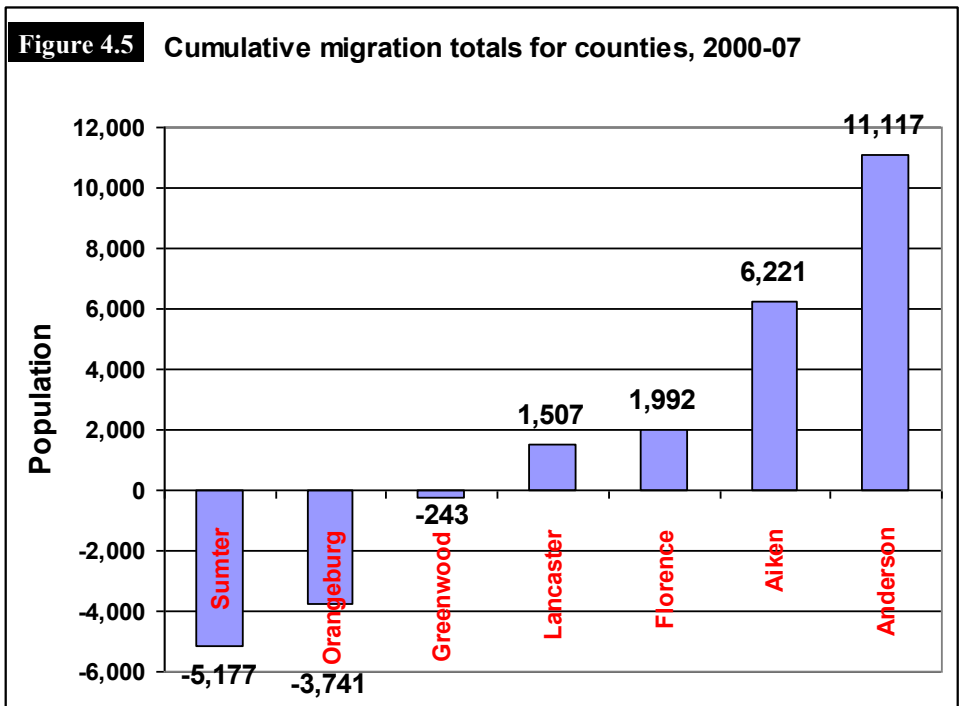
County	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Change 2002-'06
Richland	3,675	3,763	3,897	4,047	3,672	-3
Lexington	1,081	1,248	1,203	1,270	1,108	+27
Florence	1,319	1,268	1,205	1,154	1,096	-223
Kershaw	837	814	928	933	699	-138

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics, 2002-'06 data

As primarily rural counties, Clarendon and Lee have traditionally had well over 50 percent of resident-workers who have had to commute out the county for work daily due to small relative county job bases. Since 2000, job totals within the two counties have been fairly consistent and commuter patterns to various outlying counties from 2002-'06 were relatively unchanged, which supports flat population change in both counties as well. Obviously, with a declining job base in Sumter County, commuter patterns for Clarendon and Lee residents into Sumter have not increased through the years.

**Economy affects population totals**

As mentioned, a risk associated with job losses in the tri-county area is the loss of population as residents are forced to move to a new county for employment. Annual Census Bureau population estimates show rural counties in the state have struggled with domestic out-migration as a result of the manufacturing downturn since 2000, curtailing any overall net population growth. Sumter County has actually led the state in domestic out-migration since the 2000 Census according to the bureau's annual population estimates. Other similar counties, such as Anderson and Lancaster, have fared better on population totals despite

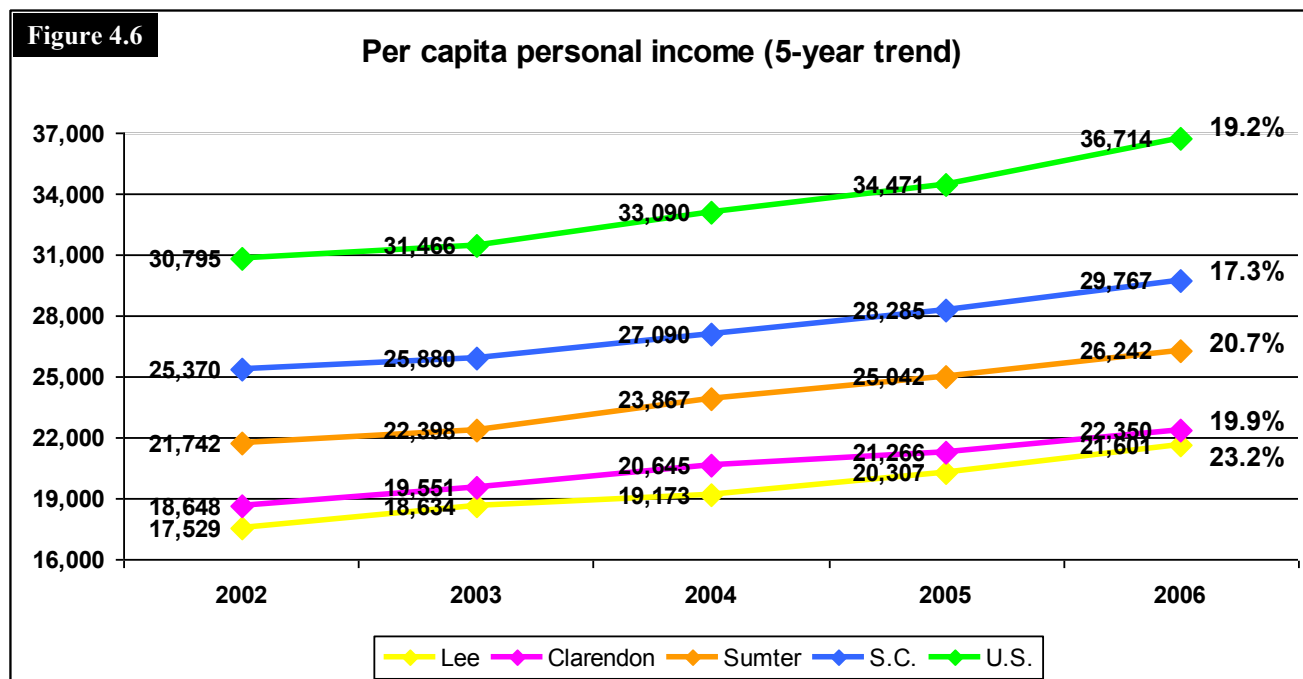


heavy job losses. This is largely because these counties are in close proximity to major metropolitan centers in Greenville, S.C., and Charlotte, N.C. For example, an Anderson worker could lose his job, gain a job in Greenville and still easily maintain his residence in Anderson and commute. Additionally, new workers coming into the Greenville or Charlotte region could choose to live in one of these counties due to less expensive property taxes. Figure 4.5 shows Sumter and similar counties' domestic migration totals since the 2000 Census. Slightly more reliable population statistics will be provided in the 2010 Census, but the current data certainly shows negative trends for Sumter. Florence and Aiken are examples of counties that have had sustainable economies since 2000 and have therefore benefited in population. Sumter County must move beyond its older economy structure in order to grow.

As historically very rural counties, Clarendon and Lee have never had significant population growth. In estimate years since 2000, Clarendon has had incidental population growth of roughly 300; while Lee has lost about 100 people.

## Per Capita Personal Income

Increasing unemployment in the area is a source of great concern, but it's not the only job-related problem facing the area. The pay scales for the three counties are below the South Carolina norm. A factor contributing to the lower wages in the area is the relatively small number of skilled workers in the counties. With fewer technically skilled workers available, major manufacturers are more reluctant to establish operations in the immediate tri-county area.



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2002-'06 data

Per Capita Personal Income (PCPI) is a valuable statistical measure of both state and local economies. PCPI is defined as the total personal income of an area's residents divided by the area's total population. Personal income is the sum of total wages and salaries, other labor income, personal interest and dividend income, transfer payments, proprietors' income and rental income, less personal contributions for social insurance. In simple terms, per capita personal income is what each resident – man, woman and child, even those with no income -- would receive if the yearly income generated by a locality were divided equally among everyone.

South Carolina's per capita personal income has historically been well behind the national average, given the state's high concentration of rural counties like the tri-county area that weigh down income averages. In 2006, South Carolina ranked 45<sup>th</sup> of the 50 states and eighth of the 12 states in the Southeast.

As would be expected, per capita income measures for Clarendon, Lee and Sumter counties are consistently below the state average, but the counties have made progress during the last five years measured as shown in Figure 4.6. All three counties improved their income levels by percentages greater than the U.S. average of 19.2 percent during the most recent five-year period. Sumter improved by 20.7 percent, Lee by 23.2 percent and Clarendon by 19.9 percent from 2002-06.

The gains aren't necessarily cause to boast since the income levels are still relatively low. In ranking the country's 363 Metropolitan Statistical Areas in 2006, Sumter was 333<sup>rd</sup> despite its solid percentage gains in recent years.

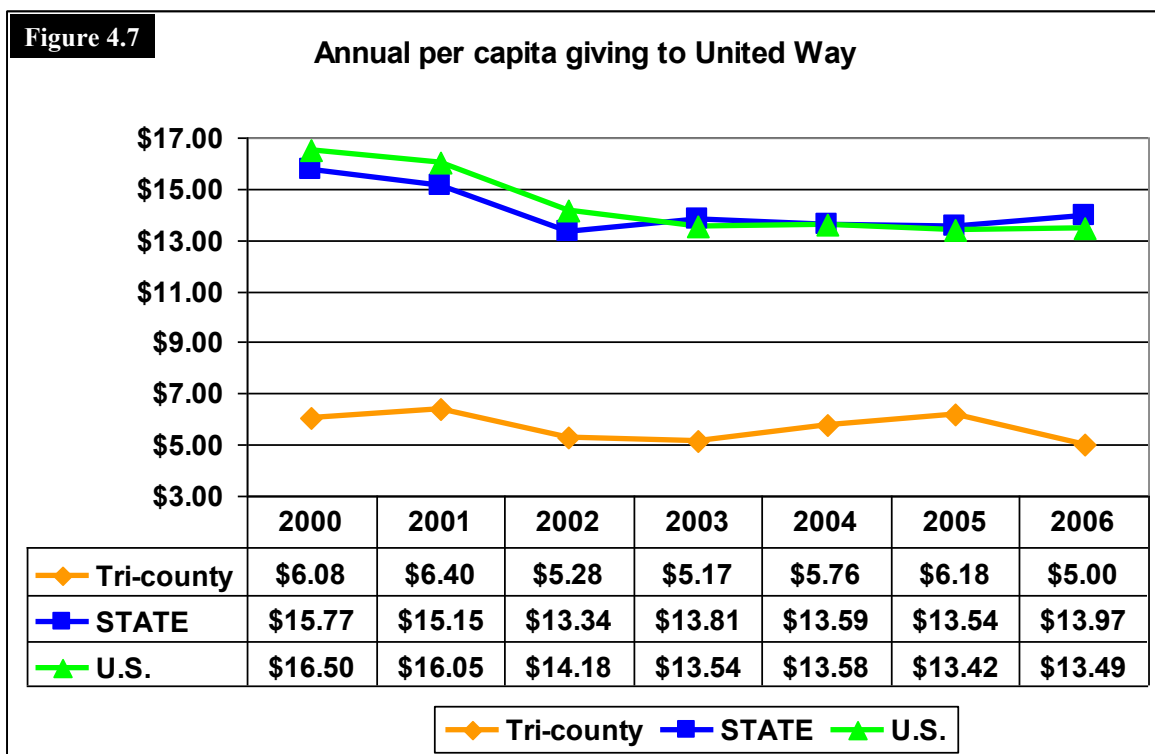
Per capita income levels can also be slightly distorted because the measurement is dependent on annual county population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. Therefore, if a county's population estimate is too low, then its per capita income will be falsely high. For example, Sumter's 20.7 percent increase in per capita income would be falsely high if the county's population estimate is too low. The same scenario could apply to Lee and Clarendon counties. Regardless, it does appear the tri-county area has begun to make income progress.

### Charitable giving

An indicator of citizens' involvement with local civic organizations is per capita annual giving to the United Way. The United Way is designated as a single donation point to raise funds for local charitable organizations. Nationally, statewide and locally, per capita giving to the United Way decreased from year 2000 through 2006 as shown in Figure 4.7. Giving totals are flat through recent years due in part to extra charities appealing to residents for money. Also higher unemployment rates and tighter financial conditions could be contributing to less per capita giving, especially among agencies in rural areas.

Per capita giving is measured by total giving to the United Way for an area divided by the area's total population. Judging by the graphic, the tri-county's giving appears to be well below the state norm. However, when analyzing the state's 30 United Way agencies about 12 had annual per capita giving totals lower or similar to the tri-county agency. Many of these agencies with low giving levels are based in rural areas, similar to our agency. State per capita averages could be skewed by very high giving levels in metropolitan areas such as Greenville, Columbia and Beaufort.

It's interesting to note the state and U.S. averages. Despite having per capita income levels roughly 80 percent of the U.S. average, our state's per capita giving to the United Way is competitive annually with the national norm.



Source: United Way of America

Other data sources show South Carolina to have giving levels that are competitive with the U.S. average. The National Center for Charitable Statistics at the Urban Institute summarizes charitable giving by state to non-profit organizations -- including churches -- from individual IRS tax returns. In 2005 South Carolina ranked 20<sup>th</sup> of the 50 states by making an average charitable contribution of \$1,352 per tax return. The U.S. average was \$1,354. The statistic for each state was measured by weighing total itemized contributions against total tax returns. Urban Institute research suggests about 70 percent of all giving is from itemized contributions; so the statistics aren't exactly precise but they do provide a realistic estimate of states' charitable giving. In other contribution variables produced by the agency, South Carolina ranked in the top 25 percent of all 50 states.

# Enhancing community health and recovery opportunities

Goal: To provide a broad range of medical care and preventative medicine education that offers the area's residents the opportunity to maximize individual, family and community wellness.

Prioritized issues that can be affected by community actions:

- A. *Improve service to residents with mental health disorders while simultaneously lowering penetration rates*
- B. *Reduce HIV and STD case rates in the African-American community through more education on the dangers of unprotected sex and increased testing*
- C. *Reduce the incidence and circumstances contributing to low birth-weight babies*
- D. *Focus community education, health awareness and preventative medicine programs to improve overall community wellness*
- E. *Enhance access to health care services for the rural poor*

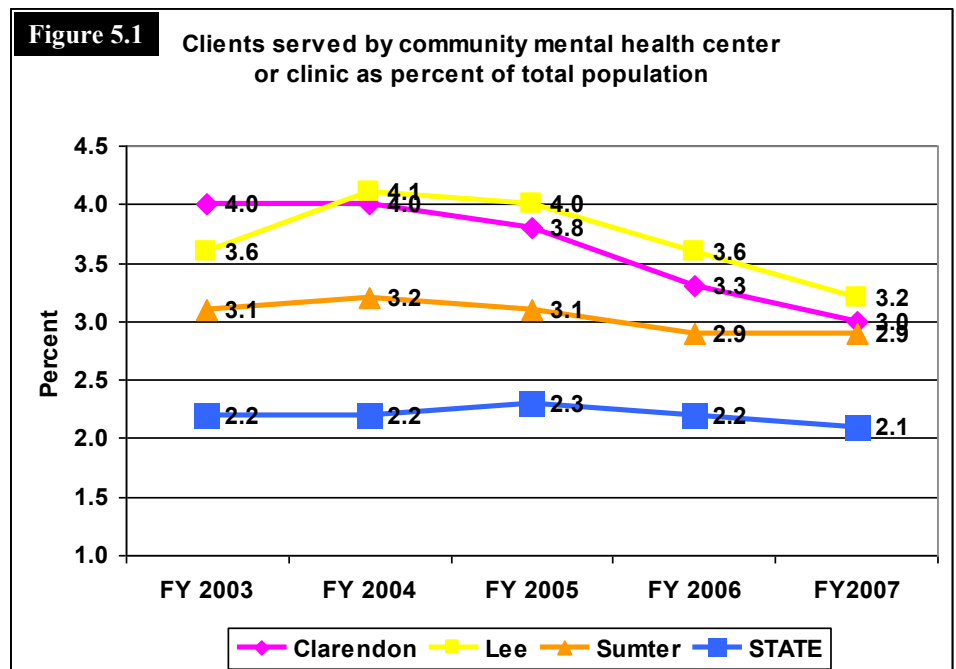
## Mental Health Disorders

The 17 regional community mental health centers in South Carolina have the major role in treating mental illness in the state. Each regional center has subsidiary clinics to serve clients in its region.

The Santee-Wateree Community Mental Health Center is responsible for treating residents of the tri-county area for severe and persistent mental health disorders, which include mental retardation, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and attention deficit disorder among many others. The center has a staff of mental health specialists and psychologists that serves patients.

According to state Department of Mental Health data, the total number of clients served by the regional center and its clinics in the three counties has actually decreased as a percentage of total population over the last five fiscal years. In fiscal year 2003, total clients served in Clarendon County were 4.0 percent of the county's total population (1,311 clients served of a population of 32,673.) In FY 2007, total Clarendon clients were 3.0 percent of total population.

This percentage is called a "penetration rate." (These percentage totals would include some duplication in clients.) In Lee County the percentage total has decreased from 3.6 to 3.2 percent of the county's population in the five years. In Sumter County the percentage served has declined from 3.1 to 2.9 percent of population. Still the penetration rate is above the state average, which has ranged between 2.1 and 2.3 percent of total population during the five-year period as represented in Figure 5.1. Santee-Wateree Community Mental Health Center Executive Director Richard Guess believes the



Source: S.C. Department of Mental Health, FY 2003-'07 data

decline in the penetration rate in the tri-county area is likely largely due to about 30 fewer employees on staff – the result of budget problems from previous years. The center hopes to add staff in the future to potentially better serve clients with severe and persistent mental illness in the tri-county area.

A review of clients served from the three counties in the state's four psychiatric hospitals and three nursing homes in the five-year period shows percentage totals similar to the state average of 0.2 percent of total population. In total, the data illustrates the number of people with severe and persistent mental illness and children with severe emotional disorders are greater in the tri-county area than the state norm.

According to Guess, the biggest issues facing the regional community mental health center in Sumter and subsidiary clinics in Lee and Clarendon counties are a lack of public transportation and staffing.

In regards to public transit, getting residents from the rural areas of the three counties without their own means of transportation to a clinic is difficult. As far as staffing, as mentioned earlier, the community center hopes to add employees to return to adequate levels. Also, the center has continual problems hiring medical professionals in Lee and Clarendon due to the counties' very rural status.

## HIV/AIDS cases

According to the state Department of Health and Environmental Control, South Carolina generally ranks in the top 10 states in the U.S. for annual AIDS case rates per 10,000 in population. Furthermore, the three counties traditionally rank near the top among our state's counties. Cumulatively from 1982 – when county reporting began – through 2007 Sumter stood third among the 46 counties in AIDS case rates with 60.2 diagnosed cases per 10,000 residents. Clarendon ranked sixth with 51.9 cases per 10,000, and Lee was 13<sup>th</sup> at 45.7 cases. The state average through 2007 was 40.3 cases per 10,000 in population. This statistic suffers from some bias because cumulative AIDS cases are measured since 1982 but cumulative population can't be measured – only “current” population. So AIDS deaths are included in the rate's numerator but other deaths aren't included in the population denominator.

In discussion with DHEC, the most effective measurement for AIDS at the county level in South Carolina is to measure “HIV positive” (HIV+) diagnosed cases who are still living per 10,000 in the current population. This statistic is called the “HIV prevalence rate,” and it tells how many positively tested HIV people are currently living in a county per 10,000 in population. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the HIV infection will eventually break down a person's immune system and cause AIDS. The onset of AIDS is the last stage of HIV infection and during this time a person's immune system is so weakened that it's no longer able to fight off illness and results in death. The HIV case total for a county includes AIDS cases since people with AIDS are HIV+. However, some HIV+ people don't have AIDS yet.

A listing of the top 10 counties in the state for HIV prevalence rates through 2006 is provided in Table 5.1. Looking at the last column, for example, there were 588 positively tested HIV residents in Sumter County at the end of 2006. This translates to an HIV prevalence rate of 55.7 residents per 10,000 in county population, ranking fifth of the state's 46 counties. Richland led all counties through 2006 with an HIV prevalence rate of 84.8 people per 10,000 in population. Lee County ranked 13<sup>th</sup> with 46.0 positively diagnosed HIV cases per 10,000, and Clarendon was 15<sup>th</sup> at 44.4 cases per 10,000 residents. Clarendon's relatively large disparity between ranking sixth for cumulative AIDS cases, but 15<sup>th</sup> for HIV prevalence is likely due to many people in the county not being tested in the early stages of HIV but waiting later when AIDS can be diagnosed. This means Clarendon's HIV case total and prevalence rate are likely biased negatively due to unawareness and lack of preventative health care.

**Table 5.1** HIV prevalence rates in counties

Top HIV+ prevalence rate counties per 10,000 in population		People living in county who've tested HIV+
1. Richland	84.8	2,882
2. Bamberg	69.3	110
3. McCormick	66.3	67
4. Orangeburg	56.1	517
<b>5. Sumter</b>	<b>55.7</b>	<b>588</b>
6. Edgefield	55.2	141
7. Williamsburg	53.4	189
8. Allendale	53.1	58
9. Hampton	49.2	105
10. Barnwell	48.4	113
<b>13. Lee</b>	<b>46.0</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>15. Clarendon</b>	<b>44.4</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>STATE AVERAGE</b>	<b>32.9</b>	

*Experts say totals here might represent only 75% of total HIV+ cases.*

Source: S.C. DHEC, Cumulative data through 2006

A sobering perspective on the positively tested HIV prevalence rates is that it is understood that there are many people who are HIV+ who haven't been tested and don't know they are carrying the virus. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately one in four Americans that are HIV+ don't know they have the virus. What this means is each county's total of people living with HIV and prevalence rates might represent only 75 percent of the true total of HIV+ residents. For Sumter County this would translate to 750 or more people living with HIV; Clarendon HIV+ residents would be close to 200 and Lee's about 125 if the estimate percentages are true. The CDC is currently researching to determine the best possible true incidence estimates. The disparity between prevalence rates and true incidence rates emphasize the importance for sexually active people to get tested for HIV.

A breakdown by demographic of people living in each of the three counties through 2006 who have tested HIV+ is presented in Table 5.2 along with percentages. The most striking total from the list is 1.27 percent of the African-American male population in Sumter County has tested HIV+. Using the best estimates, the true percentage of HIV+ African-American males in the county might be about 1.6 percent, which showcases the importance of people getting tested. The state average prevalence rate among African-American males through 2006 was 1.14 percent, still the largest among any demographic.

Overall demographic trends for the three counties were similar with African-American males having the largest percentage of HIV+ residents, followed by African-American females.

**Table 5.2** Demographics of HIV+ diagnosed people living in counties

<i>Sumter County</i>		
<u>Demographic</u>	<u>HIV+ people living</u>	<u>HIV+ people as percent of demographic</u>
White males	35	0.13
White females	14	0.05
<b>Afri. Amer. males</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>1.27</b>
Afri. Amer. females	225	0.81
Other	3	0.01
<i>Clarendon County</i>		
<u>Demographic</u>	<u>HIV+ people living</u>	<u>HIV+ people as percent of demographic</u>
White males	5	0.06
White females	2	0.03
Afri. Amer. males	72	0.86
Afri. Amer. females	66	0.74
Other	3	0.03
<i>Lee County</i>		
<u>Demographic</u>	<u>HIV+ people living</u>	<u>HIV+ people as percent of demographic</u>
White males	12	0.30
White females	1	0.03
Afri. Amer. males	56	0.85
Afri. Amer. females	26	0.40

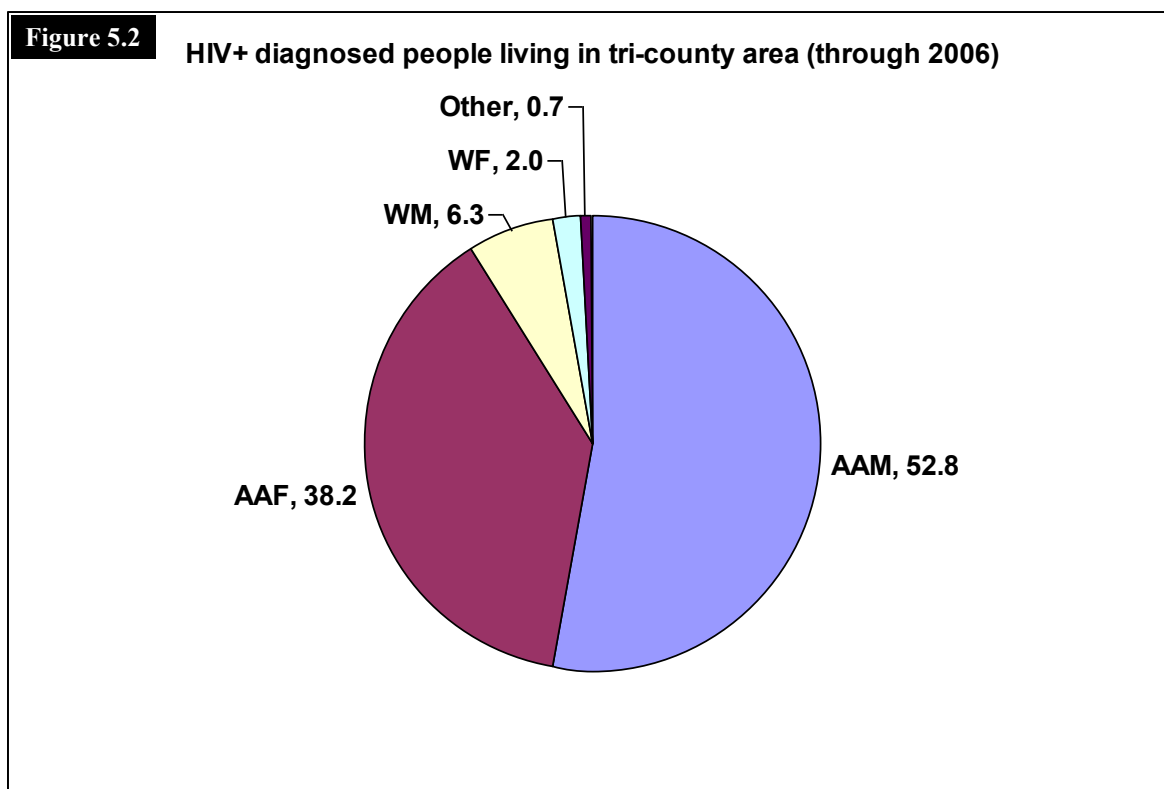
Source: S.C. DHEC, Cumulative data through 2006

### **A closer look at the counties**

County-level data through 2006 from state DHEC reveals about 91 percent of HIV+ and AIDS cases in Sumter County who were still living were African Americans with over half of these being males. Roughly 60 percent of African-American cases in the county involved unprotected heterosexual sex with an HIV+ person. Another 21 percent were unprotected sex between males with one having HIV. As mentioned earlier, a breakdown of statistics shows about 1.27 percent of African-American males living in Sumter County have tested HIV+. According to the best estimates, the true percentage of HIV prevalence in the county is closer to about 1.6 percent of African-American males.

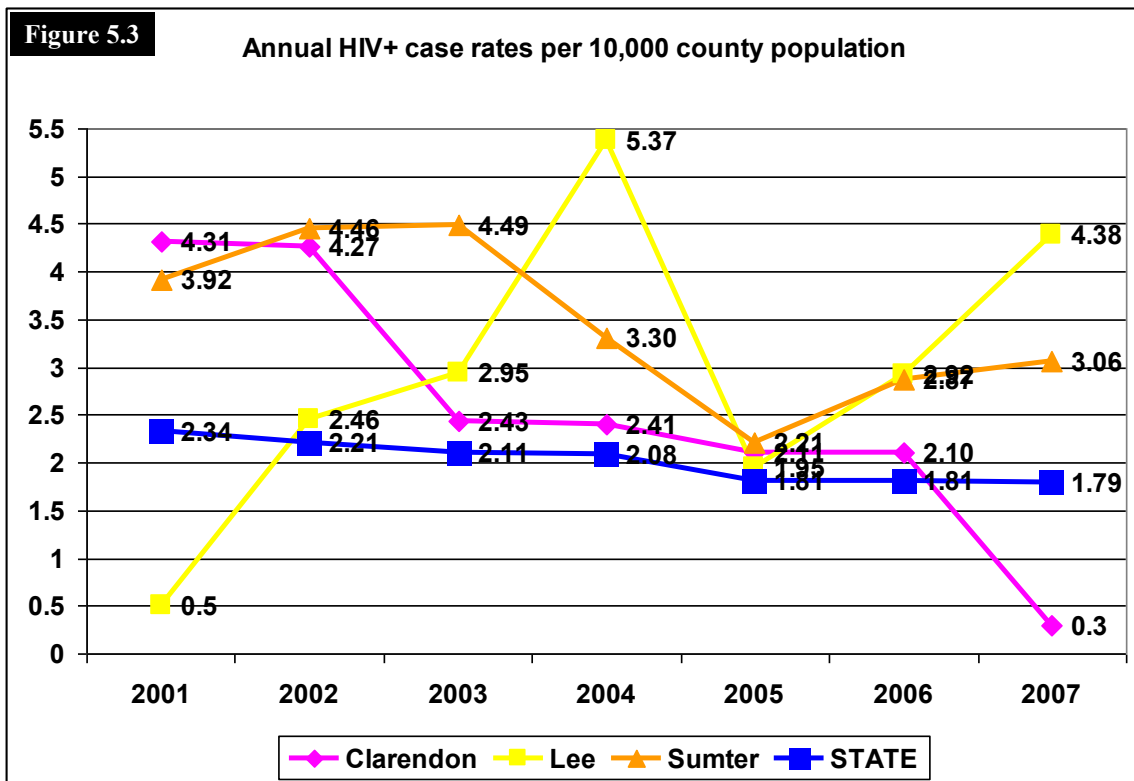
Statistics for Clarendon and Lee counties were similar to Sumter. Roughly 93 percent of HIV+ and AIDS cases in Clarendon County through 2006 of people still living were African Americans, split relatively evenly between males and females. Slightly less than 1 percent of African-American males (0.86%) had tested HIV+, but the true estimate is very likely 1 percent or greater. About 66 percent of African-American cases involved unprotected heterosexual sex with an HIV+ person. Another 19 percent were unprotected sex between males with one having HIV.

In Lee County 86 percent of cases through 2006 who were still living were African Americans, mostly males. Like Clarendon, slightly less than 1 percent of African-American males (0.85%) had tested HIV+, but the true estimate is very likely 1 percent or greater. A total of 51 percent of African-American cases involved unprotected heterosexual sex with an HIV+ person. An additional 29 percent were unprotected sex between males with one having HIV. In total, 91.0 percent of HIV+ and AIDS cases in the tri-county area representing people still living through 2006 were African Americans as revealed in Figure 5.2, with 52.8 percent of total cases being African-American males and 38.2 percent African-American females.



Source: S.C. DHEC, HIV prevalence rates through 2006

Annual HIV case rates reveal yearly HIV cases per 10,000 in population, allowing effective comparisons among counties of different sizes. Figure 5.3 shows annual HIV case rates per 10,000 residents for the three counties and the state since 2001. As would be expected, case rates in the three counties trend above the state mean. To slow the increase in HIV prevalence in the counties and reduce rankings among the state's counties, each county must attempt to implement strategies to trend lower in annual case rates in the future. Yearly rates show Sumter and Clarendon counties have had success at lowering their annual case rates since the early part of the decade.



Source: S.C. DHEC, 2001-'07 data

Overall, most HIV cases historically in the state (37 percent) are originally diagnosed when the person is 30-39 years old. But another 30 percent are first diagnosed in the 20-29 age bracket. Although treatments for AIDS and HIV can slow the course of the disease, there is currently no vaccine or cure. But these treatments are often very expensive. The survival times for African Americans with the illness are much shorter than whites due to lower income status and poor access to health care, according to many studies.

Due to the difficulty in treating HIV, preventing infection is a key aim in controlling the AIDS epidemic. Keys to prevention involve knowing your partner's HIV status before having sex – which also emphasizes the importance of getting tested – not having unprotected sex, and not sharing drug needles or syringes.

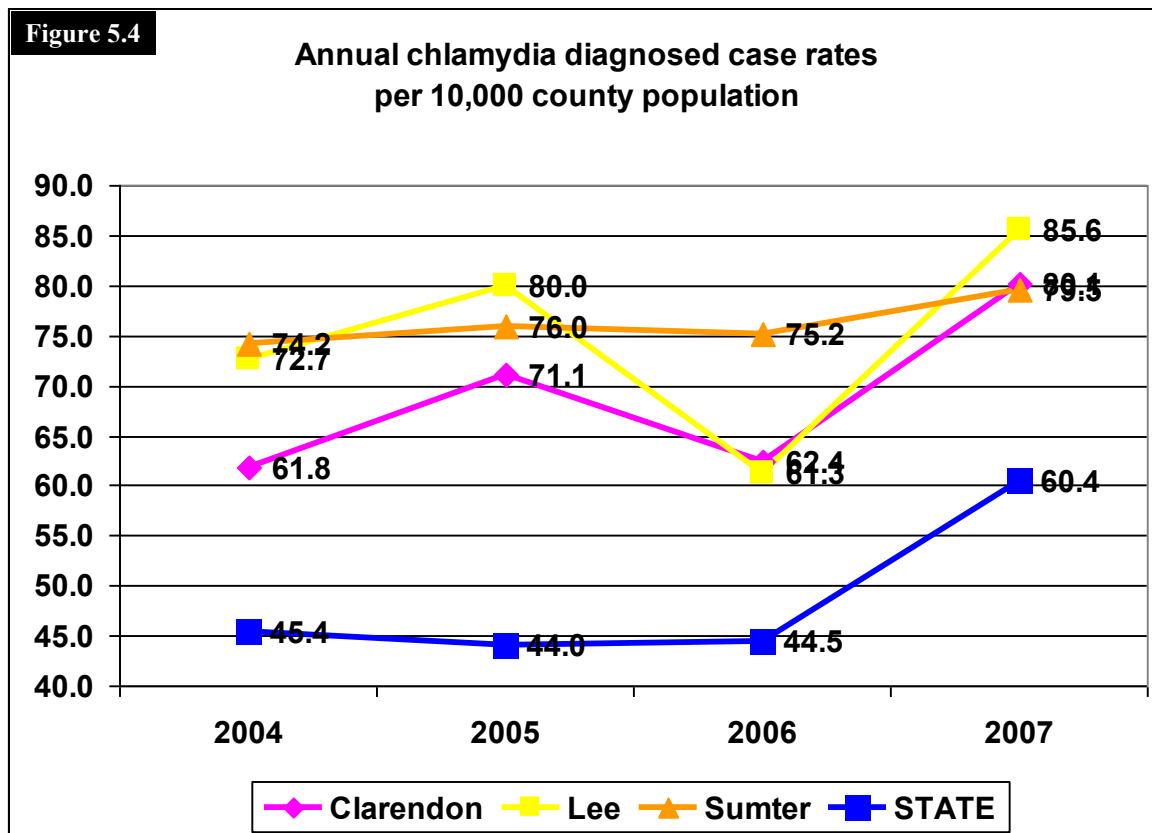
### Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) cases

#### **Chlamydia**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Chlamydia is the most frequently reported bacterial sexually transmitted disease in the U.S. Under-reporting is substantial because most people with Chlamydia aren't aware of their infections and don't seek testing. Also, testing isn't often done if patients are treated for their symptoms. Women are frequently re-infected if their sex partners are not treated. The three counties have ranked generally in the top 10 in the state for Chlamydia since 2004, according to state DHEC data. During those four years, Sumter and Lee counties averaged a ranking of about seventh of the 46 counties; while Clarendon's mean was 10<sup>th</sup>. Figure 5.4 details diagnosed Chlamydia cases annually in the three counties per 10,000 in population. Advanced testing for Chlamydia was introduced in the state in 2004 and then newer tests for even better detection of the STD were unveiled in 2007. For our analysis we begin with 2004 data. The relative spike in the line graphs for 2007 are largely due to newer tests that year.

From 2004 to 2006, the average annual rate per 10,000 in population in the state was in the mid-40s; whereas Clarendon, Lee and Sumter were generally well above 60 in diagnosed cases each year. In 2007 the state average per 10,000 population was 60.4 cases; Clarendon, Lee and Sumter were in the range of 79.5 to 85.6 cases.

Any sexually active person can be infected with Chlamydia, according to the CDC. The greater the number of sex partners, the greater the risk of infection. Because the cervix (opening to the uterus) of teenage girls and young women isn't fully matured and is probably more susceptible to infection, they are at particularly high risk for infection if sexually active. **State statistics bear this out with about 86 percent of all cases since 2004 involving females with two of every three cases in South Carolina involving African-American women.** Chlamydia can also be passed from an infected mother to her baby during vaginal childbirth.



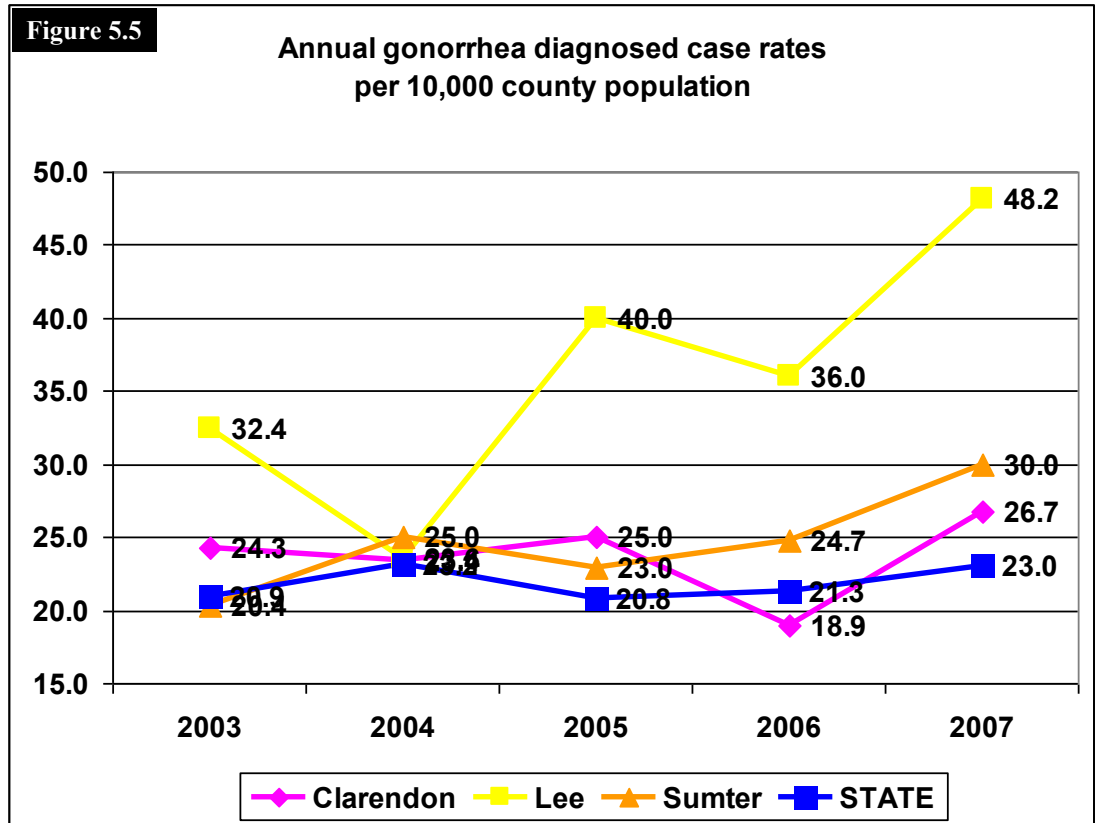
Source: S.C. DHEC, 2004-'07 data

The best way to avoid transmission of STDs is to abstain from sexual contact, or to be in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who has been tested and is known to be uninfected. Latex male condoms, when used consistently and correctly, can reduce the risk of transmission of Chlamydia.

### Gonorrhea

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, gonorrhea is a bacterial sexually transmitted disease. Like Chlamydia, there is significant under-reporting. Any sexually active person can be infected with gonorrhea. In the U.S., the highest reported rates of infection are among sexually active teenagers, young adults and African Americans. **State statistics bear this out with about 85 percent of annual cases involving African Americans, generally spread evenly between males and females.**

Tri-county statistics from DHEC show Lee County with a very high annual rate for gonorrhea per 10,000 in population as Figure 5.5 details. During the five years from 2003-'07, Lee averaged a ranking of seventh of the 46 South Carolina counties in gonorrhea-diagnosed cases per 10,000 residents. In 2005 the county ranked third, and in 2007 Lee was No. 1 in the state with a rate of 48.2 cases per 10,000 population -- more than double the state



Source: S.C. DHEC, 2003-'07 data

average. Clarendon and Sumter have both averaged a ranking of about 16<sup>th</sup> of the 46 counties during 2003-'07 with rates generally slightly above the state average each year. Like Chlamydia, gonorrhea can also be spread from mother to baby during delivery. According to DHEC, more advanced testing for gonorrhea was introduced in the state in 2007 that slightly increased the incidence of the STD but not as much as the spike in Chlamydia cases.

The surest way to avoid transmission of STDs according to the CDC is to abstain from sexual intercourse, or to be in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who has been tested and is known to be uninfected. Latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, can reduce the risk of transmission of gonorrhea.

### Expectant mothers' prenatal care visits

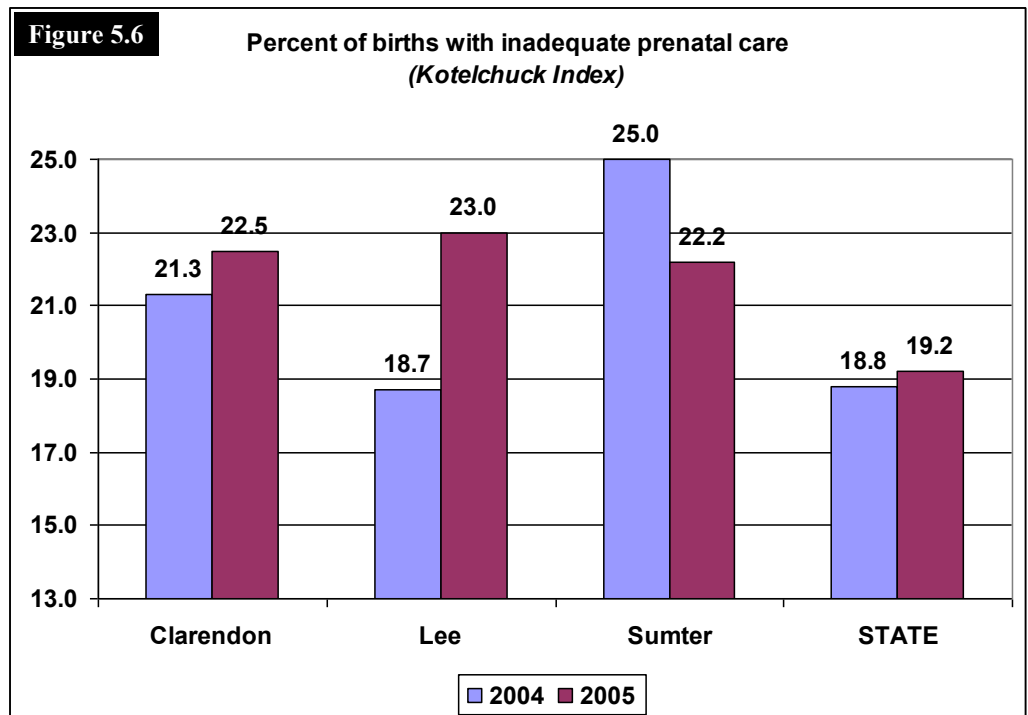
Numerous studies show that early and regular prenatal care is often vitally important to the health of both the mother and the child. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), inadequate prenatal care has been associated with increased risks of low birth-weight births, premature births, neonatal mortality, infant mortality and maternal mortality. Prenatal care is important because it allows a physician to identify and treat problems as soon as they arise.

The Kotelchuck Index is the new standard indicator of the adequacy of prenatal care used by states. The index determines the adequacy of prenatal care with a summary score based upon the month of entry and the number of prenatal visits after care began until delivery. The profiles define adequate prenatal care as a score of 80 percent or greater on the index.

### Kotelchuck Index measurement definitions

- **Inadequate** (Prenatal care begun after 4<sup>th</sup> month or less than 50% of recommended prenatal visits were received.)
- **Intermediate** (Prenatal care begun by 4th month and 50% to 79% of recommended prenatal visits were received.)
- **Adequate** (Prenatal care begun by 4th month and 80% to 109% of recommended prenatal visits were received.)
- **Adequate Plus** (Prenatal care begun by 4th month and 110% or more of recommended prenatal visits were received.)

For our analysis we measure the percentage of births with inadequate prenatal care in the tri-county area and the state. A revised birth certificate in the state has been used since 2004 offering new prenatal care data; so only 2004 and 2005 are measured. Figure 5.6 reveals in 2005 the percentage of births with inadequate prenatal care in all three counties was in the range of 22 to 23 percent, above the state average of 19.2 percent. A review of previous county birth certificate data from 2000-'03 shows similar trends above the state average. With one-in-four to one-in-five mothers receiving inadequate prenatal care, more intervention needs to be done.



Source: Division of Biostatistics, SC DHEC, 2004-'05 data

Percentage breakdowns for the three counties show in more than 25 percent of all African-American births in 2004-'05, the mother had inadequate care. The level of inadequate care for white births was about 17 percent. According to the CDC this trend is due to socioeconomic factors, such as income, educational level and access to health care and insurance.

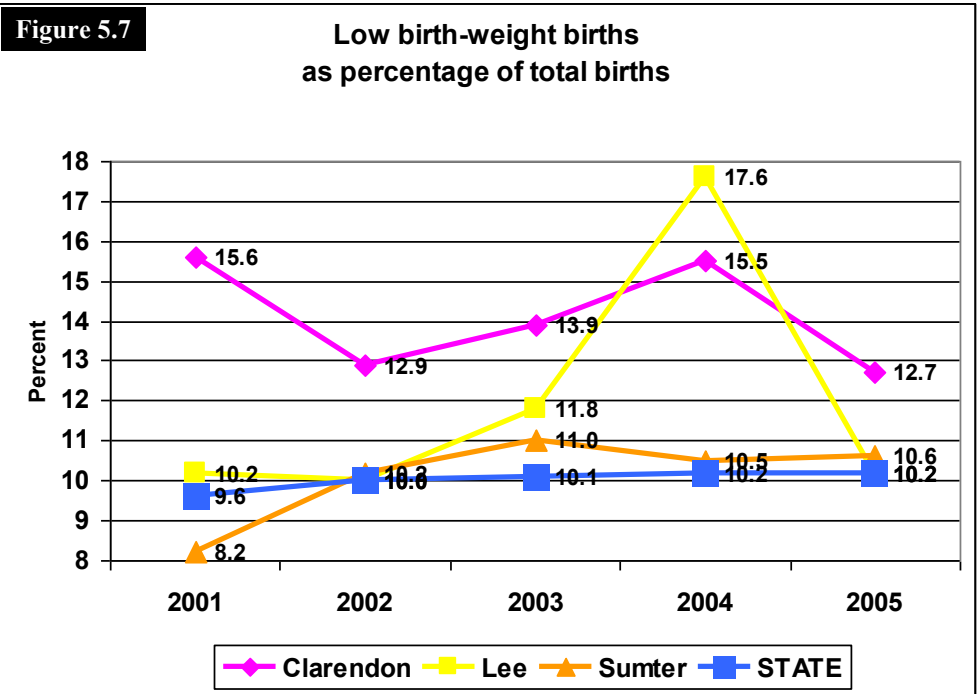
### Low birth-weight babies

As stated, inadequate prenatal care can result in numerous medical problems for both mother and child.

In the tri-county area the percent of low birth-weight births as a percentage of total births is above the state average. As Figure 5.7 shows, Sumter County's rate is similar to the state average of about 10 percent during the five-year period from 2001-'05 according to biostatistics data from the state Department of Health and Environmental Control. Clarendon and Lee counties were generally well above the

state average through the years. Lower income levels and higher poverty rates in these counties largely contribute to inadequate prenatal care and low birth-weight babies. **State Kids Count data shows low birth-weight babies face a much greater risk of lack of school readiness, poor academic achievement and special education placement in the elementary grades.**

The U.S. average percentage for low birth-weight births was 8.2 percent in 2005, up from 8.1 percent in 2004. In 2000, the U.S. average was 7.3 percent.



Source: Division of Biostatistics, SC DHEC, 2001-'05 data

**Research shows about 70 percent of all low birth-weight babies in the tri-county area are African American with the remainder mostly white. The largest maternal age cohort for low birth-weight babies is 20 to 24 year olds**, followed by 25 to 29 year olds. The myriad of medical problems associated with low birth-weight babies dictates the need for the communities to take every precaution necessary to limit the number of these births.

### Medical care and insurance levels

Similar to much of the Southeast, South Carolina has a significant rural element. The state overall has transformed with a much higher percentage of the population living in urban areas in 2000 compared to 1960. In 1960, 58.8 percent of the state's population lived in rural areas; in 2000 the total was 39.5 percent. Sumter County has followed a similar trend as the state, decreasing from 59.8 percent of the population in rural areas to 38.5 percent during the 40-year period as shown in Table 5.3. However, Clarendon and Lee counties have stayed mostly rural through the decades. In 2000, 85.3 percent of Clarendon's population still lived in rural areas and 81.2 percent of Lee residents lived in rural areas. For the tri-county area as a whole, 53.7 percent of the population still lived in rural areas in 2000.

**Table 5.3** Rural populations in counties

County	1960		2000	
	Population	Percent rural	Population	Percent rural
Clarendon	29,494	86.7%	32,502	85.3%
Lee	21,832	83.6%	20,119	81.2%
Sumter	74,941	59.8%	104,646	38.5%
Tri-county area	126,267	70.2%	157,267	53.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

The tri-county area has two hospitals in Tuomey Regional Medical Center and Clarendon Memorial Hospital. Richland, Florence and Lexington counties have some of the finest hospitals in the state and are accessible by helicopter as well as four-lane highways and the interstate system. Despite the medical infrastructure, the tri-county's large rural component hampers its ability to provide comprehensive medical care to all residents. A significant percentage of the residents of the rural areas don't practice preventative medicine due to lack of awareness, transportation and/or financial resources.

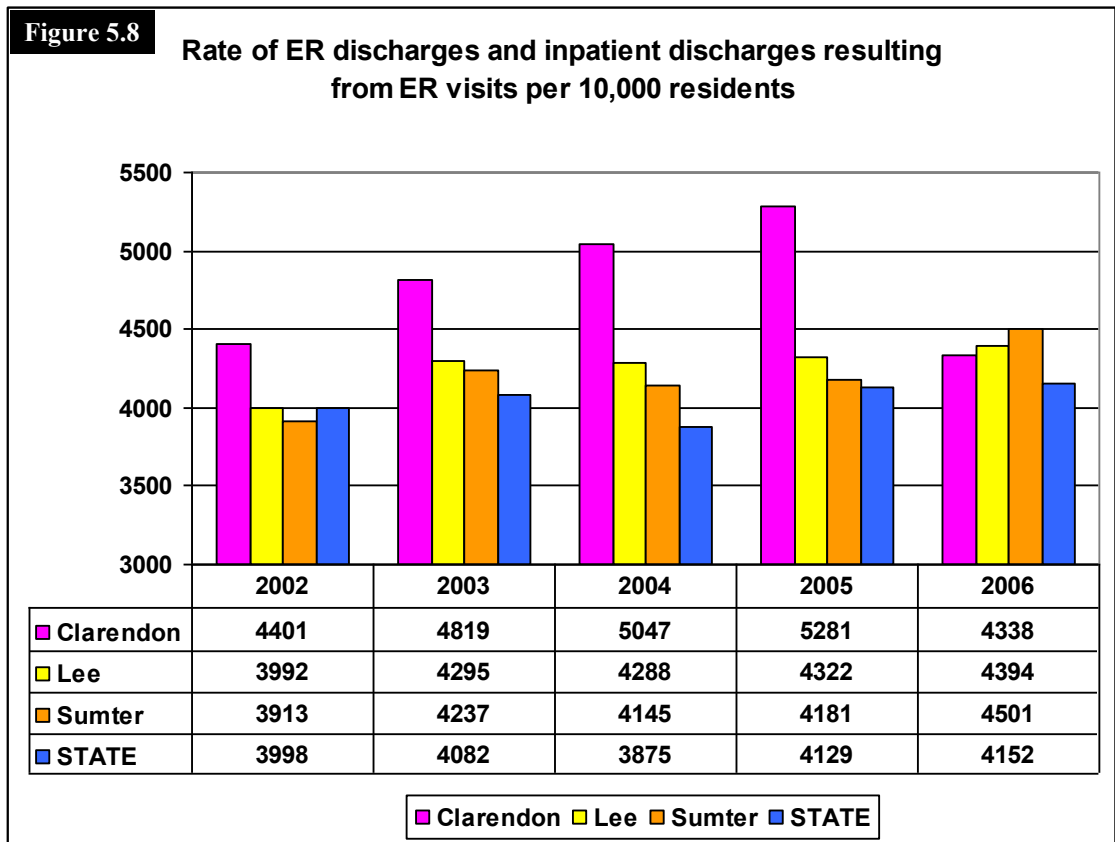
County-level data regarding health insurance isn't currently routinely collected. A 2003 household insurance survey conducted by the South Carolina Department of Insurance (DOI) is considered the most accurate study to date on the medically uninsured in the state. The study was based on 2002 data. Survey findings showed the region that included Clarendon, Lee and Sumter among several other counties lacked the most health insurance coverage of the four state regions in the study. Findings included the following:

- 19.4% of state residents were "uninsured," meaning they were without health insurance coverage for all or some part of the previous 12 months. (The U.S. average for 2002 was 15.2% according to Current Population Survey data from the U.S. Census Bureau.)
- 8.3% of the state's residents were "chronically uninsured," meaning they were without health insurance for the previous 12 months.
- **In the Pee Dee region – which included Clarendon, Lee and Sumter counties among several others – 21.2% of the population was uninsured for all or some part of the previous 12 months. Additionally for the Pee Dee region, 24.8% of children under 18 years old were uninsured and 30.5% of 18 to 24 year olds were uninsured. In each of these survey totals the Pee Dee ranked worst of the state's four regions.**
- An estimated 60% of the uninsured in the Pee Dee said they were employed. The majority of these individuals were employed in construction, retail trade, hotels/motels and manufacturing. Most of these uninsured said affordability was the reason they had not purchased health insurance.
- Likely nearly 50% of the uninsured in the Pee Dee had household incomes of \$30,000 or less.
- About 31% of the unemployed in the Pee Dee were uninsured.

#### **Emergency Room discharges and inpatient discharges resulting from ER visits**

Inadequate health insurance can be also confirmed statistically by Emergency Room discharges and inpatient discharges resulting from ER visits. The uninsured and underinsured, which are often in rural counties, often seek Emergency Room treatment for conditions, such as asthma, diabetes and hypertension, which should be treated on an outpatient basis with preventative care. In Figure 5.8, Emergency Room discharges and inpatient discharges resulting from ER visits per 10,000 county residents show tri-county residents have higher rates of this type hospitalization than the state average.

Five years of data are measured and in every instance from 2003-'06 each county's rate of Emergency Room visits and inpatient discharges from ER visits is greater than the state norm. The chart shows Clarendon County was significantly above the state average from 2002-'05.

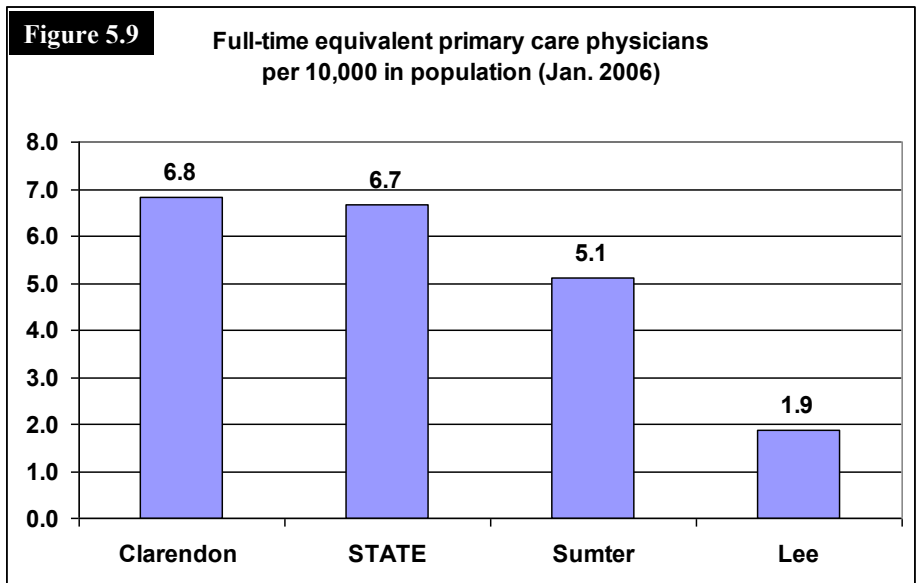


Source: Office of Research & Statistics, S.C. State Budget & Control Board, 2002-'06 data

A grant study by the state Office of Research & Statistics from the early part of this decade using 1999 statewide inpatient hospitalization data showed similar trends. The study found that rural county residents in the state were 26 percent more likely to be hospitalized for a possibly preventable hospitalization than urban county residents. Of all rural residents, children ages 0-5 were the most likely to be hospitalized for a possibly preventable hospitalization over urban county children. The 2003 state Department of Insurance survey confirmed these results, showing one of every four uninsured in the state use the Emergency Room annually.

**Primary care physicians in counties**

As would be expected, the number of primary care physicians per 10,000 in population in rural areas is generally much lower than urban counties in the state. Primary care physicians include family practice, general practice, internal medicine, pediatrics and obstetrics. According to 2006 data from the state Office of Research and Statistics, the state average was 6.7 full-time equivalent, non-military, primary care physicians per 10,000 in population. However in the same report Clarendon County had 6.8 full-time equivalent primary care physi-



Source: Office of Research & Statistics, S.C. State Budget & Control Board, Jan. 2006 survey

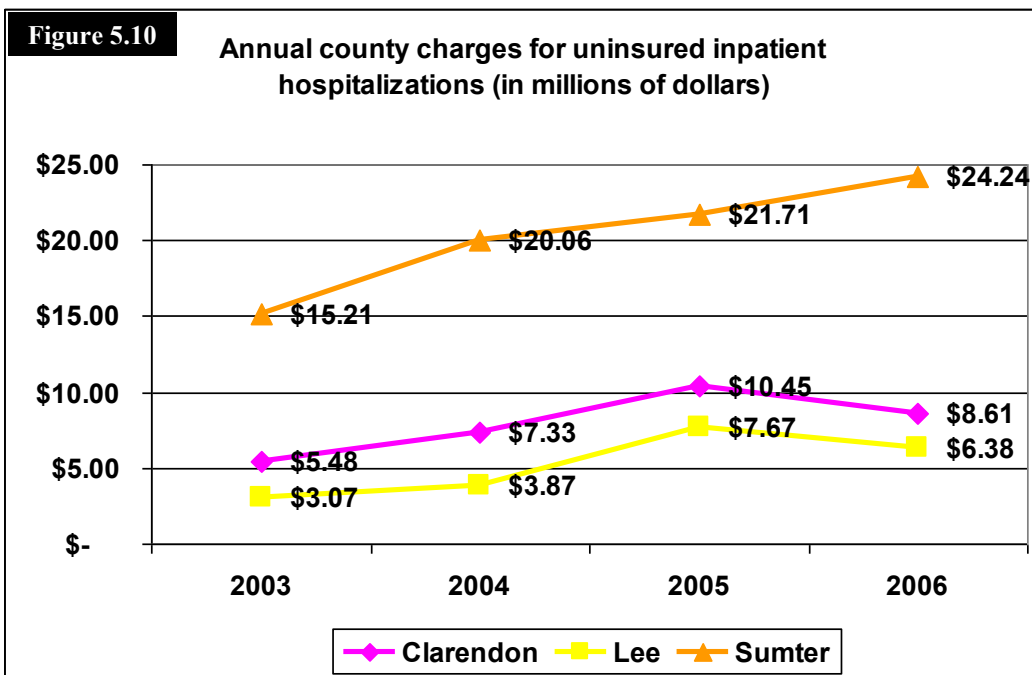
icians per 10,000 county residents, a total slightly above the state average. Sumter County followed at 5.1 per 10,000 and Lee had only 1.9 physicians per 10,000 residents, markedly below the state norm. Lee's 3.8 full-time equivalent primary care physicians were third lowest of any county in the state. Statistics from 2005 showed similar trends for the three counties. A full-time equivalent physician is when a physician(s) logs at least 36 hours of work per week in a county.

In summary it's apparent the greatest health care issues facing many tri-county area residents are a lack of awareness, transportation and/or financial resources, which prevent them from receiving preventable care.

### Health care charges for the uninsured continue to rise

In recent years health care costs for the state's "uninsured" -- as measured by self payers for services and indigent care (those who are too poor to pay anything) -- have risen extensively. **A very small percentage of uninsured health care charges are ever paid.** State annual charges for the uninsured for

inpatient hospitalizations rose by 64 percent, or \$405.7 million, from 2003 to 2006 according to data from the state Office of Research & Statistics. The tri-county area reflected similar trends as represented in Figure 5.10. From 2003-'06, Clarendon and Sumter saw similar increases in total uninsured inpatient charges at 57.2 percent and 59.4 percent, respectively. Lee's total uninsured inpatient charges more than doubled, rising from \$3.07 million in 2003 to \$6.38 million in 2006. The tri-county area as a whole experienced a

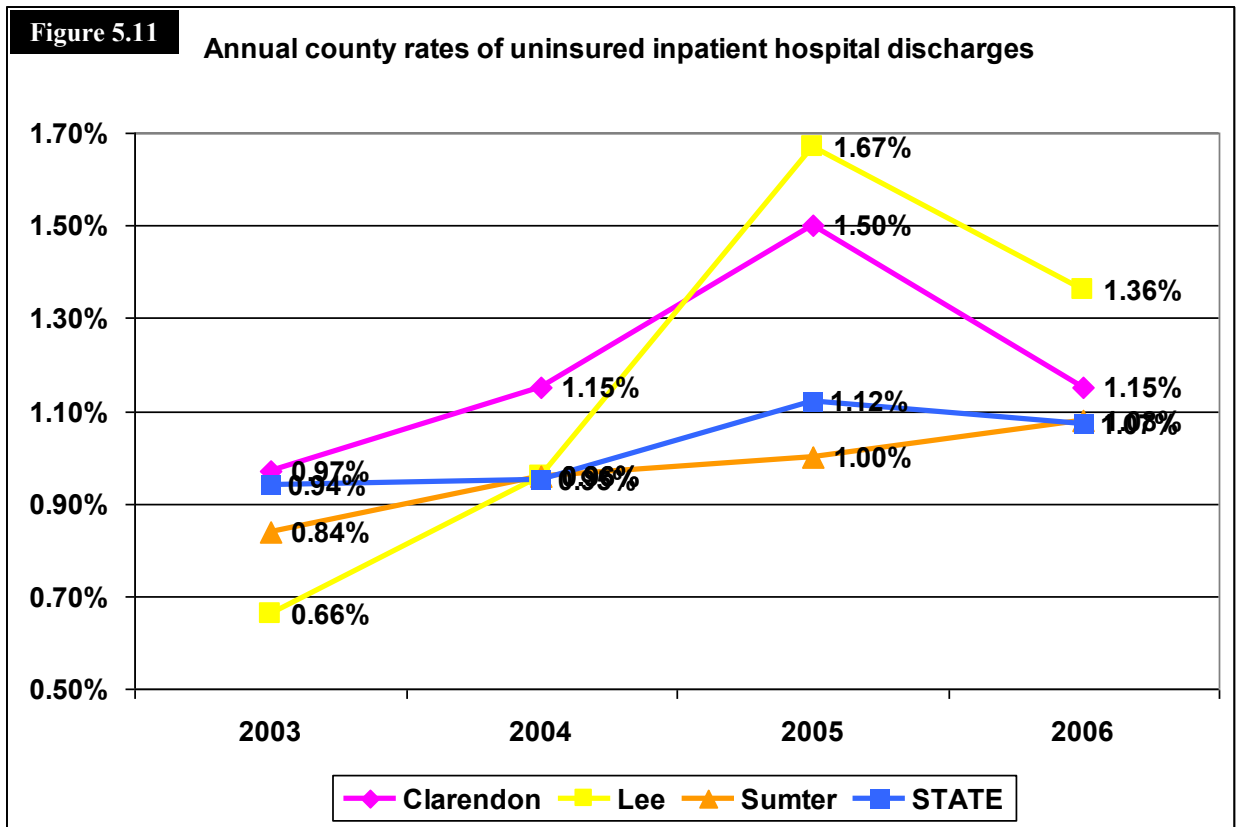


Source: Office of Research & Statistics, S.C. Budget & Control Board, 2003-06 data. Totals don't include ER outpatient charges

65 percent hike in uninsured inpatient charges during the four-year period. One note is these health care costs don't include any Emergency Room outpatient charges, which are unable to be captured in current data collection.

The higher annual charges for the uninsured through the years in the three counties were not only the result of increased health care costs, but also more services being provided to the uninsured. Uninsured inpatient service discharges in the tri-county area rose by 33 percent, or 441 discharges, in the four years; however, population growth in the three counties was very minimal, if any, during 2003-'06. Annual population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau show no growth in the counties in the timeframe, but estimates for the Hispanic population are likely undercounted. Even accounting for small growth in Hispanics in the tri-county area, the rate of growth in uninsured discharges of 33 percent is well above the population growth rate for the four years.

Figure 5.11 uses yearly population totals and uninsured discharge totals to determine annual county rates of uninsured inpatient hospital discharges. As would be expected the two more rural counties, Clarendon and Lee, show large rate increases in uninsured discharges from 2003 to 2006. Lee's annual uninsured discharge rate more than doubled during the timeframe. Sumter's uninsured discharge rates track about at the state average. All the trend lines show increasing rates, which reflect a growing percentage of the population being uninsured. Again, these totals don't include Emergency Room outpatient discharges that aren't currently captured in the data.



Source: Office of Research & Statistics, S.C. State Budget & Control Board, 2003-06 data. Totals don't include ER outpatient discharges.

