

FACING FACTS

A Study Identifying Significant Challenges

Facing the Sumter, Clarendon and Lee Communities

The Study is Produced as a
Partnership of:

The United Way of Sumter, Clarendon and Lee Counties

&

The Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments

Building Strong Families Individuals, Children, and Youth

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

Prioritize issues that can be affected by Community actions:

1. Reduce the incidence of teen pregnancy/single parent families;
2. Provide training to enhance parenting skills;
3. Reduce the incidence of substance abuse problems;
4. Satisfy the recreational needs and quality of life opportunities for youth and seniors.

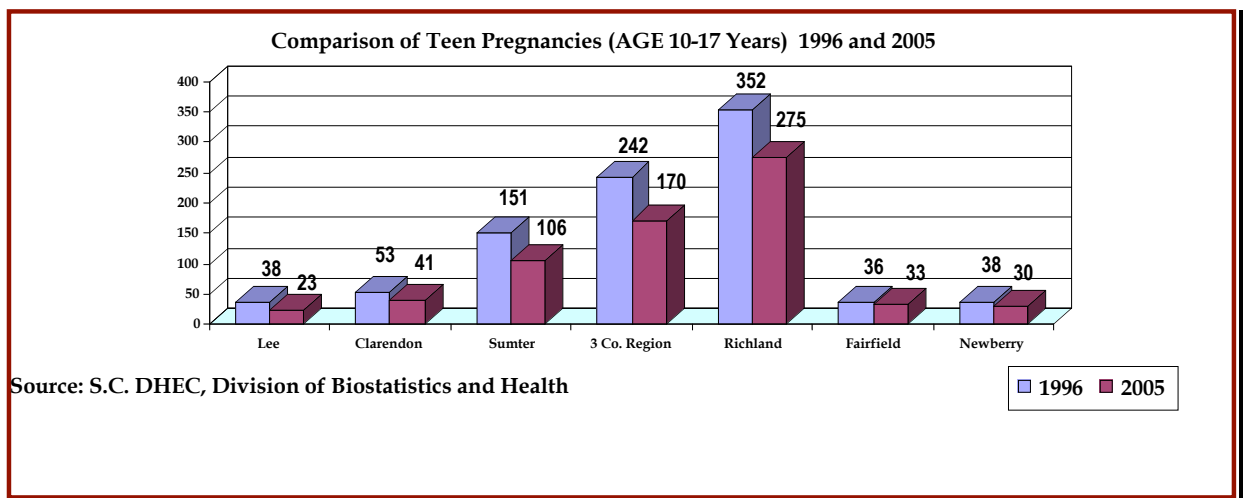
REDUCE TEEN PREGNANCY & SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES

Long-term indicators selected to measure the impact of pregnancy on teenage girls and the single female head of households in our counties:

1. Teenage pregnancy
2. Births to unwed females (all ages)

Teenage Pregnancy

In 2005, the number of Statewide teen pregnancies was approximately two-thirds that of the 1996 totals. Our three counties' 30% decrease in teen pregnancy during this period was only slightly below the South Carolina average.



While teen pregnancies have substantially decreased, these pregnancies still are a root cause for many of the other social ills facing our communities. Some of the social problems impacted by teen pregnancies include the following:

1. A greater percentage of teenage mothers' sons end up in prison;
2. Only about 40% of teen mothers complete high school;
3. Teen mothers are twice as likely to receive late or no prenatal care as non-teenage mothers;
4. Children of teen mothers are 50% more likely to repeat a grade or fail to complete high school;
5. Daughters of teen mothers are 22% more likely to become teen mothers themselves;
6. Children of teenagers are twice as likely to be abused as are children of mothers over twenty.

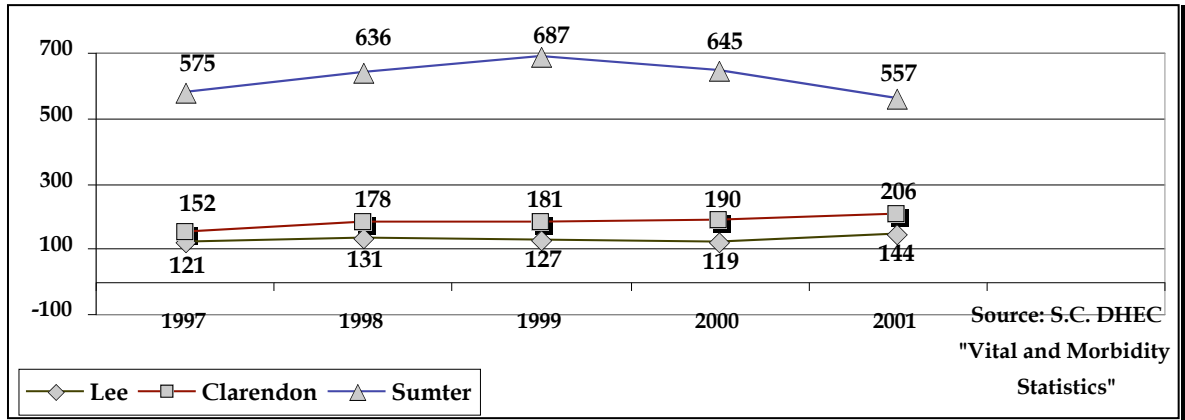
The relationship of teen pregnancies to these other social problems and their associated costs presents a substantive argument to expend community assets to further reduce these pregnancies.

Births to Unwed Females (All Ages)

Over the last 15 to 20 years, the number of births to unwed mothers has reached a level of concern in both the nation and the State of South Carolina. A major element of this national concern is that unwed mothers are in the high risk group for families that fail to meet the poverty threshold. In addition to many unwed mothers receiving low wages, they also face the daily challenge of balancing work and family responsibilities.

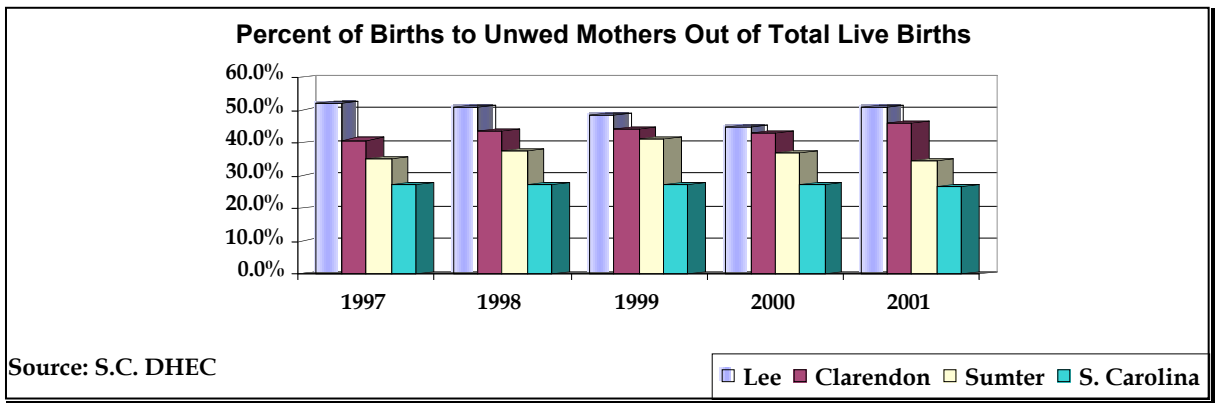
The number of unwed mothers in the three-county area remained fairly constant during the period of 1997 to 2001.

Live Births to Unwed Mothers in the Three Counties



With the largest population in the area, Sumter County has the highest number of live births to unwed mothers. Sumter has seen its births to unwed mothers decline over the last two years of available data. In Clarendon and Lee Counties, births to unwed mothers continue to grow at a steady pace.

A more accurate picture of the scope of this situation in the three-county area is the percentage of births to unwed mothers compared to total live births in the area.



The above graphic illustrates the large percentage of births to unwed mothers in the two more rural counties of Lee and Clarendon. Over the course of the five-year period 1997 to 2001, one of every two births in Lee County was to an unwed mother. The situation in Clarendon County is not much better, where over 4 out of every 10 live births are to unmarried females. Sumter is approximately ten percent higher than the South Carolina average of twenty-seven percent (27%). These percentages of births to unwed mothers out of the total live births illustrate the scope of this social phenomenon and its long-term local and regional economic implications.

The education level of unwed mothers in the counties of South Carolina can not be accurately determined, but the education level of all the mothers of live births can be identified. In 2001, over 20% or one out of every five mothers state-wide had not completed high school. Sumter and Lee Counties have approximately the same percentage as the State of South Carolina, but Clarendon County faces a much more serious situation. In Clarendon County, one out of every three live birth mothers does not possess a high school education. This number of new mothers who have not completed high school is one of the highest in the State.

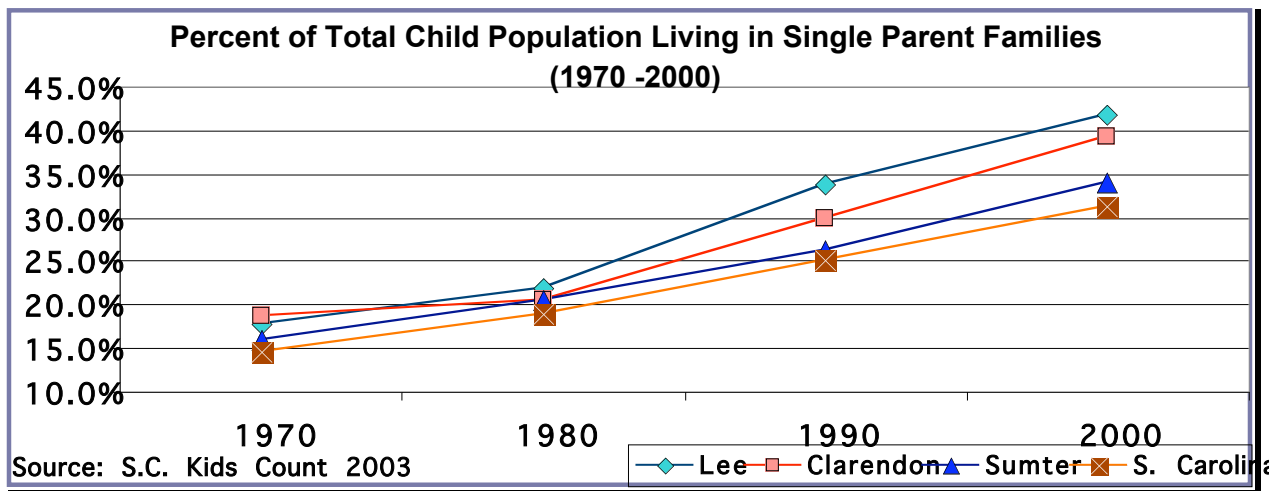
PROVIDE TRAINING TO ENHANCE PARENTING SKILLS

Indicators selected to measure the need for parenting skills training to enhance the quality of life for the area’s children and youth.

1. Single parent families
2. Poverty rate for single parent families with children

Single Parent Families

The continuing rise in out-of-wedlock births, combined with an increasing divorce rate, has resulted in a phenomenal increase in single parent families throughout South Carolina. Our three counties have a particularly high percentage of children in single parent families, with 40% of all the children in our two more rural counties living in single parent families.



As the above graphic shows, the percent of children in single parent families has increased by over 100% in all three of our counties and the State of South Carolina since 1970.

Poverty Rate of Single Parent Families with Children

Single parent families are a major component of poverty at the State and local levels. A majority of these types of families, especially those headed by single females, are most likely to be poor. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of South Carolina’s children living in poverty are in single parent families. Sumter County has 69% of its children living in poverty residing in single parent families, Lee County has 64%, and Clarendon County has the smallest percentage with 53% of all its children below the poverty level coming from single parent families. Race plays another important role in the overall numbers of single parent families, with African Americans and Others (AAO) having significantly higher levels of single parent families and the attendant poorer living conditions.

	Percent of AA&O* Children Living in Single Parent Families	Percent of White Children Living in Single Parent Families	Percent of Children in Single Parent Families Living in Poverty	Percent of Children in Married Couple Families Living in

				Poverty
Clarendon	53.2%	17.9%	45.8%	14.7%
Lee	51.6%	18.1%	43.0%	11.6%
Sumter	49.0%	17.3%	42.8%	9.1%
S. Carolina	52.0%	19.0%	40.2%	7.5%

* AA&O = African American and Others
Source: S.C. Kids Count 2003

In addition to poverty, the difficulties faced by single parent families include in many cases lack of proper supervision of children, a greater likelihood of juvenile delinquency, and a marked increase of failure to complete high school. These and other effects of single parent families identify these families as important targets for community involvement in this growing social phenomenon.

REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF DRUG ABUSE PROBLEMS

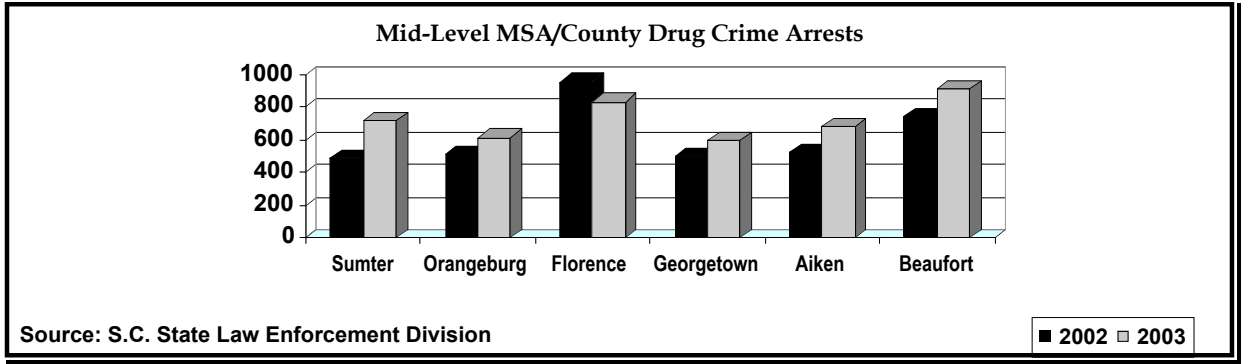
Long range indicators selected to measure the change in drug abuse, to include alcohol, remedies over time.

1. Drug Crime Arrests
2. Driving Under the Influence (DUI)

Drug Crime Arrests

Drugs are a pervasive force in the crime statistics of South Carolina. While illegal drugs play a major role in the commission of all types of crime in South Carolina, the stand-alone drug arrests ranks as the highest crime category in the State, as well as in almost every county in the State. In 2003, there were 945 fewer total arrests in South Carolina than in the previous year (2002). While total arrests dropped, drug arrests in 2003 increased by 2,700 over the 2002 drug arrest totals. This increasing state-wide drug problem has an affect in the local Clarendon-Lee-Sumter area. Our two rural counties actually saw a decrease of 69 drug crime arrests from 2002-2003, but Sumter County’s drug crime arrests increased by 226 over the same period. This resulted in Sumter County having a growth rate of over forty-five percent (45%) in a one-year period.

Sumter’s increase is mirrored by most of the mid-size metropolitan areas throughout the State. As the following graphic shows, all metro areas similar to Sumter, with the exception of Florence, saw a significant increase in drug crime arrests in 2003. Florence’s decrease in drug crime arrests was from an exceptionally high level of arrests in 2002. The number of arrests in 2003, while lower than in 2002, is still higher than most of the similar cities/counties. These mid-size metropolitan areas act as distribution points for many drugs and serve both the drug- taking population within the county and also the population from the surrounding rural counties.



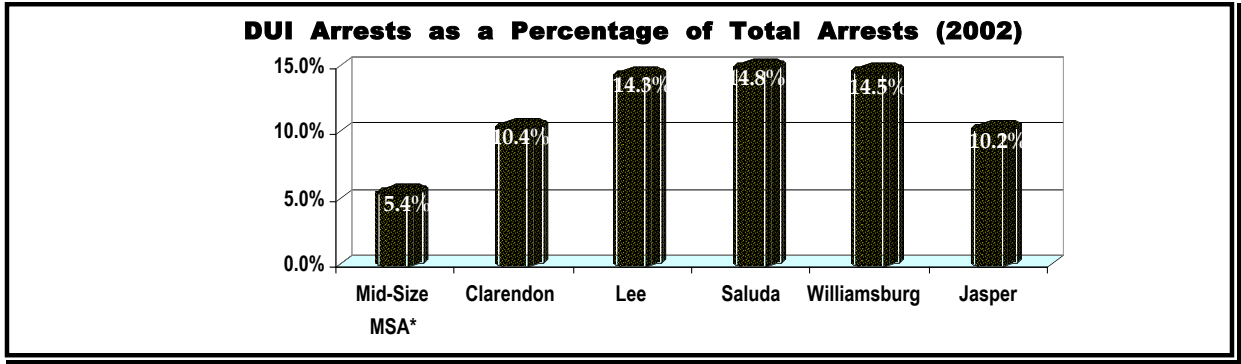
While there is not a direct correlation between drug arrests and the level of drug usage in a county, the number of drug crime arrests is a legitimate indicator of drug usage. This indicator points to a continuing rise in drug use. This increased illegal drug use calls for continued emphasis on getting drugs off the street and, more importantly, the need for a concerted effort by both private and public agencies to implement more effective and far-reaching drug rehabilitation programs. These expanded programs must operate both in the community and as part of the criminal sentencing structure of imprisonment, parole, and pardon.

Illegal drug use is the root cause of many of the criminal activities taking place in our counties. In addition, illegal drug usage takes a heavy toll on individuals and families throughout the three-county area. The economic, medical, and emotional costs to families and their communities of contending with a drug abuser, damages that family's normal interdependencies and their relationships with their friends, neighbors, and the community at large.

Driving Under the Influence (DUI)

Alcohol abuse is a long standing problem in many segments of South Carolina society. Alcohol is a drug, but it is not perceived by many mainstream South Carolinians to have the negative impact of marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamines. In reality, alcohol abuse causes the same amount of damage to individuals and families as illegal drugs and is more prevalent State-wide.

Alcohol abuse, as measured by the number of DUI arrests as a percentage of total arrests, appears more prevalent in the rural counties than in the mid-level metropolitan areas.



Source: S.C. State Law Enforcement Division (SLED)

***The Mid-Sized MSAs is the average of DUI arrests as a percentage of total arrests from Sumter, Florence, Orangeburg, Georgetown, Aiken, and Beaufort Metropolitan Statistical Areas.**

The alcohol abuse in the more rural counties in some ways is compatible to the "hard drug" problems associated with the mid-sized MSAs. While driving under the influence accounts for a large number of the arrests in these non-metro counties, alcohol related arrests play an even greater role in the crime statistics of these rural counties. The totals of alcohol related arrests in our counties show that the rural counties have a much higher propensity of alcohol abuse.

	Total Arrests	DUI Arrests	Liquor Law Arrests	Drunkenness Arrests	Total Alcohol Arrests	Percent of Total Arrests
Clarendon	1,685	175	106	31	312	18.5%
Lee	750	107	93	5	205	27.3%
Sumter	3,512	200	135	128	463	13.2%
S. Carolina	221,931	13,415	11,830	9,472	34,717	15.6%

Source: S.C. State Law Enforcement Division 2002

The alcohol related arrests in Lee County account for over one-fourth of all arrests in the County and are almost double the percent of alcohol related arrests State-wide in 2002. Alcohol treatment programs, particularly in Lee and Clarendon Counties, need to be expanded in conjunction with an extensive anti-alcohol education initiative targeted at the Counties' youth.

SATISFY THE RECREATIONAL NEEDS AND QUALITY OF LIFE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH AND SENIORS.

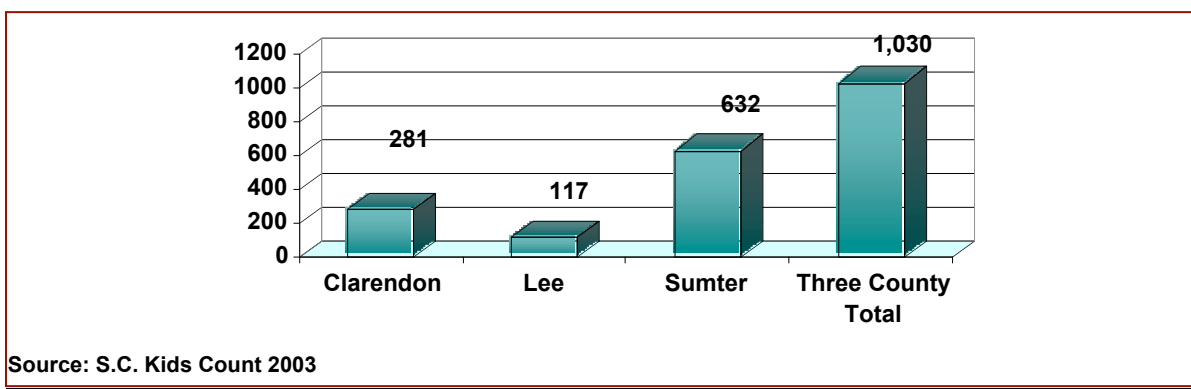
Indicators selected to measure the recreational needs and quality of life for the area's youth and senior population:

1. Demographic data on the youth of the three-county area.
2. Demographic data on the senior population of the three-county area.

Demographics of the Youth Population

For the purpose of this report, youth will include all residents of the individual Counties and the State who are 13 to 20 years of age. In the three-county area, the total number of this age group was 19,719 in the 2000 Census. While the majority of these 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. The youth who are neither in school or working are defined as "idle youth". These youth are the most at risk of alcohol and/or drug abuse and criminal activity. Recreation opportunities alone can not address the problems facing the idle youth population, but since it is needed by the other youth of the community, any participation by "idle youth" can be considered a bonus result.

Idle Youth by County & Three-County Area Total



As of 2003, there were over one thousand youth in our area that fit the definition of "idle teen". These "at risk" youth are hard to reach and pose a difficult problem for involved agencies and residents of the Counties. While the individual county numbers do not appear too dramatic, all three counties are above the national average and only Sumter County bests South Carolina's norm, with a 99% of the State average.

While the "idle teens" are a portion of the counties' youth that require assistance to return to a productive life course, there is another segment of the youth population that needs special attention to establish a better quality of life. This youth segment, the under 13 years of age to 17 years of age, are those who have been arrested and entered into the Juvenile Justice system. While many of the youth in the Juvenile Justice system also are part of the "idle teen" segment of the three-county area's youth population, there is a significant number of youth who are in school or working that run afoul of the law.

The 2003-2004, 730 of the area's youth were put into the Juvenile Justice system. Statewide the number of youth entered into Juvenile Justice was 27,328. This results in Clarendon, Lee, and Sumter Counties' youth having accounted for 2.5% of all the youth in Juvenile Justice.

Juvenile Justice Cases by Age, Race, and Family Type (2003-2004)

	Total Cases	13 Years and Under Cases	14 and 15 Years Cases	16 Years and over Cases	White Cases	Minority Cases	Cases with Youth from Single Parent Families
Clarendon	190	72	80	38	59	131	84
Lee	85	16	44	25	5	80	39
Sumter	455	105	214	136	109	341	255
Total	730	193	338	199	173	552	378

Source: S.C. Department of Juvenile Justice

Fourteen and fifteen year olds make up the bulk of this area’s Juvenile Justice cases. Three out of four of juveniles in the program were minorities and over 50% are from single parent families. Another area of concern is the 30% increase in violent juvenile cases from 2002-2003 to 2003- 2004. One final area of interest is that 301 or over 40% of all area youth put into the Juvenile Justice system had prior cases in the system.

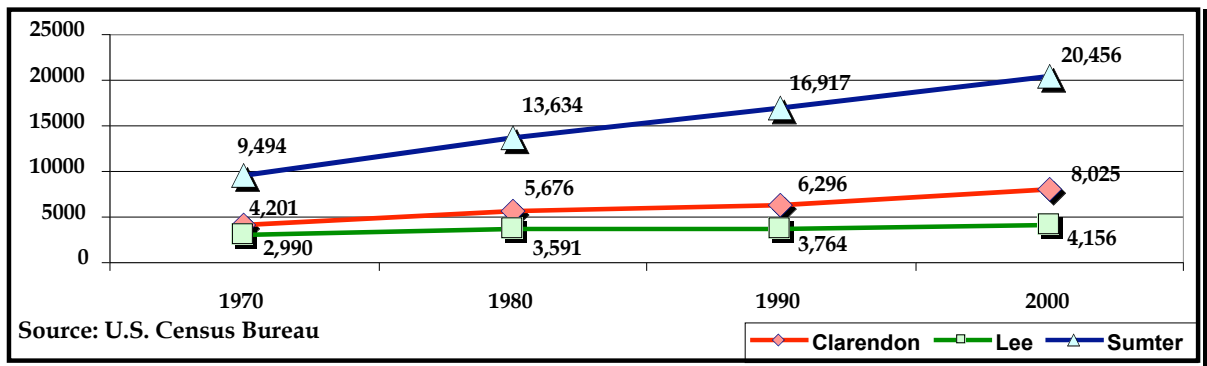
The area’s “at risk” youth, in conjunction with the needs of all the counties’ youth in general, require adult supervised recreational activities to provide them with a better quality of life.

Demographics of the Senior Population

The senior age category (those people who have reached the age of 55 years of age) is the fastest growing portion of the American population. This phenomenon is also the case in this three-county area.

A large segment of this elder population has the time for and interest in recreational activities to a degree not experienced by most of the other age groups.

Senior Age Trends for the Three Counties (1970 – 2000)

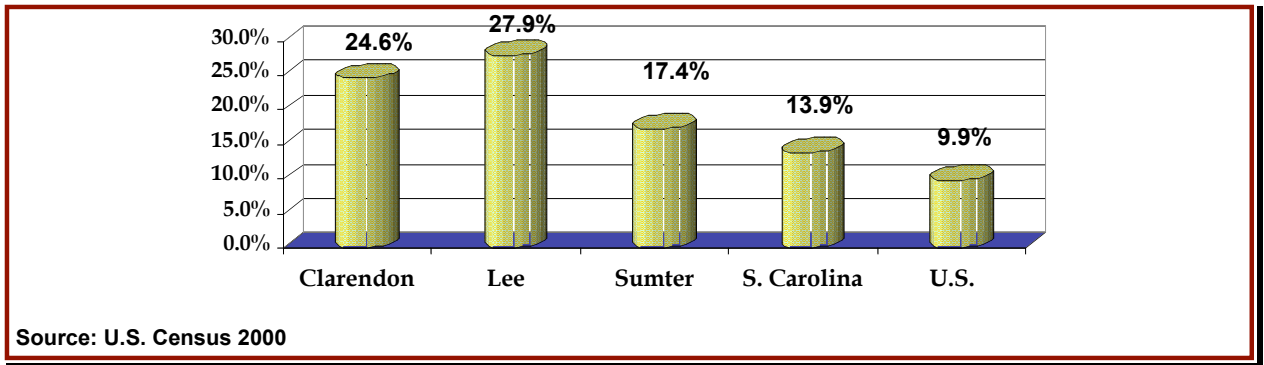


The Senior segment of the area’s population almost doubled over the last three decades. This growth requires a re-evaluation of the scope of the recreational activities in our geographic area. This portion of the population is usually economically comfortable and therefore more involved in recreational interests. Although there are a relatively high percentage of these Seniors who are interested in the more physical recreation, the majority of this age group prefers a more cultural aspect of recreation. The growth of the Senior population will not only continue but actually expand. In many

of our counties, recreation alternatives have not kept pace with Senior growth and therefore fail to accommodate the scope of Senior's interests.

There is another segment of the elderly population, Seniors who live below the poverty level. This is a relatively small section of the Senior age group at the national level. However, Seniors who are living below the poverty level make up a much greater percentage of this region's aging population.

Percent of 65 and Over Population Living Below the Poverty Level



In terms of recreation and especially quality of life issues, these Seniors pose a different type of challenge. An even more compelling situation is identified when poverty in the elderly community is examined by the level of Senior poverty. The 2000 census identified over 2,000 senior citizens (age 55 and above) in the three-county area as living in severe poverty. Severe poverty is defined as living below one-half of the poverty threshold.

While the recreation and quality of life needs of these poorer senior citizens must be addressed, they require a different type of investment by the community. Activities for the group of seniors would mean little or no cost to the senior and may also require transportation assistance in the rural portions of the area.

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, both the economically stable and those in poverty.

Affordable Housing and Access to Public Transportation

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

Prioritized issues that can be affected by Community actions:

- 1. Increase access to affordable home ownership;**
- 2. Provide affordable housing alternatives to home ownership;**
- 3. Address homelessness issues;**
- 4. Develop reliable, affordable, and accessible public transportation systems.**

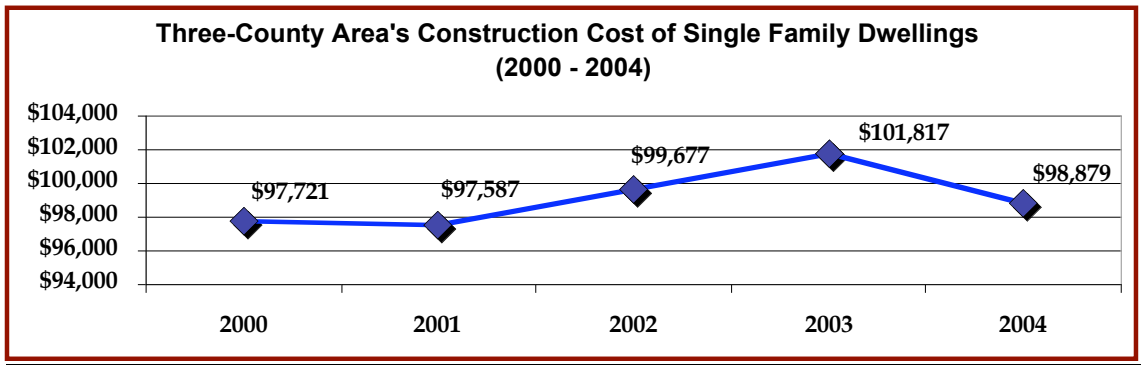
INCREASE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HOME OWNERSHIP

Long-term indicators selected to increase home ownership for the lower income population of our communities:

1. Value of new homes in area.
2. Homeowner monthly housing costs.

Value of New Homes in Three-County Area

Nationally, the new home market has grown steadily over the last five years. This trend has been duplicated in the local counties. Not only has the annual number of new single family dwellings or “stick built” homes grown at a dramatic rate, but the construction value of these homes has steadily increased. The construction value of a home is the contractor- determined cost for building a particular single family dwelling and is a low-side indicator of the selling cost of a new home.



Source: Lee, Clarendon, and Sumter Planning Commissions

The average construction cost of new detached houses in the three-county area is approximately \$100,000. It must be remembered that this \$100,000 figure is the housing contractors’ best estimate of the cost of construction and is not the selling price for the new homes. Considering the selling price mark-up, the average cost of new single family dwellings in the three-county area is more in line with the economic levels of the area’s middle to upper middle class population.

While there is some funding available for affordable housing new home construction, the bulk of the new single family dwelling construction in our area is priced well above the economic means of a significant portion of the area’s population. Since approximately four out of every ten area residents fall into the low and moderate income strata, the majority of current new home construction in the three-county area does not meet the needs of these lower income families.

Percent of Low and Moderate Income Population by County - 2000

	Clarendon County	Lee County	Sumter County	3-County Area
Pct of Population	48.3%	48.3%	40.8%	42.4%

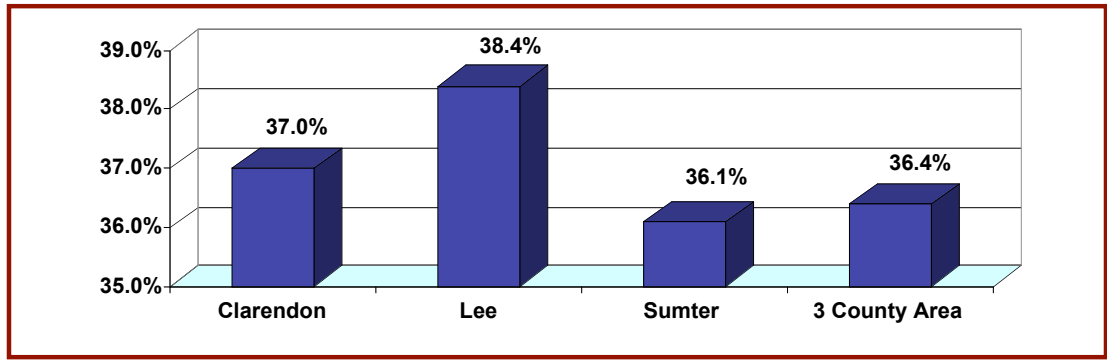
Census 2000, U.S. Census Bureau

The value of home ownership for those residents of our communities who are in the lower income strata cannot be over emphasized. A greater effort is needed to increase the building of affordable single detached housing units in this region. This effort should include aggressive pursuit of government grants, new initiatives by local non-profit organization, and the establishment of private/public partnerships to develop financing options to fund additional affordable housing projects.

Homeowner Monthly Housing Costs

A household's income is a major element in determining the affordability of housing. When housing costs absorb an inordinately large portion of a family's income, there is an economically damaging effect on a household. Despite factors like level of income, a rule of thumb for monthly housing costs is that approximately twenty-five percent (25%) of the home owner's income goes toward housing costs.

Percent of Households Where Housing Cost Accounts for More Than 25% of Income



Source: 2000 Census, U.S. Census Bureau

When over one-third of the area's households spend more than 25% of their monthly income on housing costs, the continued growth of home ownership is threatened. Of further concern is that fourteen percent (14%) of the three-county area's households spend fifty percent (50%) or more of the home owner's income on housing costs. Despite the presence of the Sumter Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), this area is predominantly rural and this 14% of households spending 50% or more of income on housing costs is higher than the national rural average. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service, ten-percent of households in non-metro areas nationally had housing expenses that exceed fifty percent in 2003. This area's higher percentage of households spending a large portion of their income on housing needs increases the likelihood of home foreclosure and/or bankruptcy.

Provide Affordable Housing Alternatives to Home Ownership

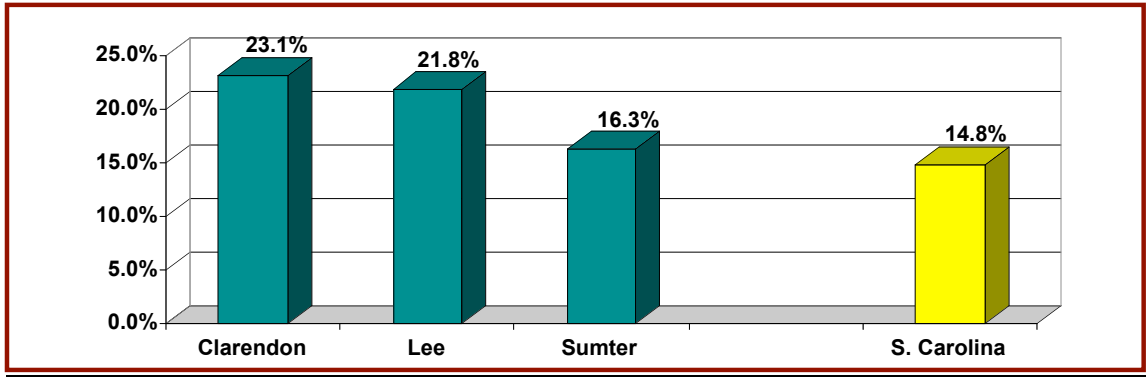
Long-term indicators selected to evaluate alternatives to home ownership for the lower income population of our communities:

1. Housing needs of those at or below the poverty level;
2. Renter's monthly housing costs.

Housing Needs of Those At or Below the Poverty Level

This area of South Carolina has a larger percentage of households in poverty than the State average. The housing situation is even graver for those area residents who live at or below the poverty level. Since this group of householders' income precludes most from qualifying for home ownership, these households rent shelter which is, for the most part, subsidized.

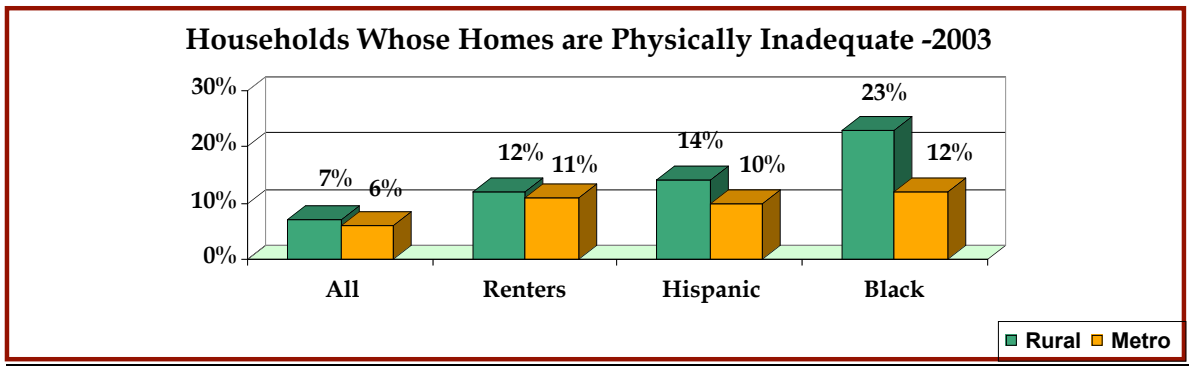
Percent of Population Living Below the Poverty Level - 2000



Source: Census 2000, U.S. Census Bureau

Much of the rental property, particularly in the three county seats, for poverty households consists of multifamily homes (duplexes and apartments) that have been built for the lower income population. Several of these low income housing tracts are in disrepair or actually scheduled for demolition. The disrepair of these more urban affordable housing projects dictates a growing need for new multifamily housing to meet the current and future needs of this segment of our population.

In the predominately rural portions of the area many of those in poverty rent single family units. While these rentals are also primarily subsidized, the dwellings are often in worse physical condition than those in the urban areas. Based on national statistics, there is a racial component to this rural housing problem.



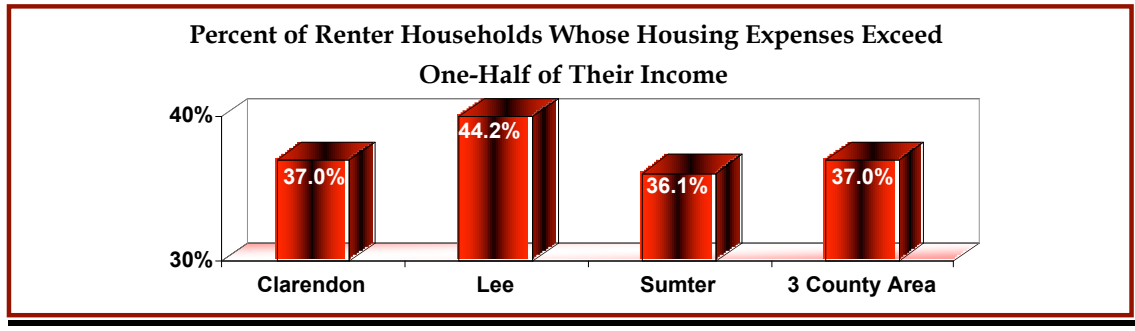
Source: Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture

This below standard housing in rural areas affects all segments of the poverty population, but perhaps single mothers with young children are the most at risk. These single female heads of households often rent homes that are sub-standard and they do not have the financial resources or know-how necessary to make the house livable.

Refurbished and/or new affordable rental housing is needed for both the area's rural and urban economically disadvantaged population. Although urban and rural rental housing needs are somewhat different, there is a need for a comprehensive approach to providing affordable rental opportunities for all low income segments of our counties.

Renter's Monthly Housing Costs

According to the 2000 Census, there are a total of 15,281 rental households in Lee, Clarendon, and Sumter Counties. The majority of these renters do not fall into the affordable housing population, but there are a significant number of renters whose incomes require low rent housing. Of these 15,281 area renters, 5,628 pay over twenty-five percent (25%) of their income for housing needs.



Source: .Census 2000, U.S. Census Bureau

In the three-county area, the median gross rent equates to one-quarter of household income. With almost four out of every ten renters in the three counties paying anywhere from 25% to over 50% of their income for housing, the need for more affordable housing is evident. This need is even more pressing when the area's renters who pay more than fifty percent of their income on housing needs is considered. While the counties percent of households' housing expenses exceeding 50% of income is significant, our area's renters, with the exception of those in Lee County, fall below the national average.

Clarendon	Lee	Sumter	Three County Area	National Rural	National Urban
15.1%	24.9%	13.1%	14.4%	21.0%	24.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau & U.S. Department of Agriculture - 2003

The relatively large percentage of area households below the poverty level, plus the number of low to moderate income families, necessitates a much broader and expansive affordable housing initiative for this region of South Carolina. A major portion of this initiative should be directed toward livable and affordable rental units for the lower income portion of our population.

ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS ISSUES

Long-term indicators selected to address the needs of the homeless population, both individual and families with children, in our area.

1. Meeting the needs of homeless individuals;
2. Gaps in dealing with homeless families with children.

Meeting the Needs of Homeless Individuals

Homelessness is an ongoing problem in the Nation, the State and area’s three counties. Homeless individuals are those who lack a regular, fixed, adequate nighttime residence. These individuals require a series of support services to reverse their current homeless situation. The needs of the homeless can be divided into two main categories:

- a) Shelter consists of emergency housing which is a short-term temporary shelter option, typically limited to 90 days, and transitional housing which is the next step after emergency shelter and provides full supportive services for up to 24 months.
- b) Supportive services consist of a whole range of services to address the physical, psychological, economic, and social needs of the homeless individual.

Determining the scope of the homeless situation within geographic boundaries has always been a difficult task. The Total Care for the Homeless Coalition (TCHC) is a coalition of 60 housing and supportive service providers that collaborate to offer services to the homeless in the Santee-Lynches and Waccamaw Regions – a total of seven counties. In 2004, the TCHC surveyed these providers and identified what services are available and needed by county.

Within the three-county area there are a total of twenty-two non-profit organizations, charitable groups, and government agencies providing services to homeless individuals. With only slightly more than 50% of needed beds, there is a documented shortage of area emergency shelter and transitional housing for homeless individuals. The lack of any shelter beds for homeless individuals in Lee and Clarendon Counties is a detriment to effectively dealing with the homeless problems in our area.

	Beds Needed	Beds Available	% of Needed Beds	Bed Gap
Clarendon	10	0	0%	10
Lee	7	0	0%	7
Sumter	254	144	57%	110
TOTAL	277	144	52%	127

Source: Homeless Housing & Gaps Analysis, Total Care Homeless Coalition – 2004

Supportive services for the homeless cover the entire spectrum of services including medical, counseling, food, substance abuse, and job training assistance. The bulk of homeless individuals’ supportive services are provided by the agencies and organizations in Sumter County. The supportive services provided to homeless individuals in the three-county area are generally adequate, but there are severe gaps in certain categories of services. While the area’s homeless organizations have a good record in providing meals and clothing, there are substantial gaps in providing services for substance abuse, case management, medical treatment, and job training assistance. There is also a serious deficit in dealing with veterans, youth, and persons with HIV.

Gaps in Dealing with Homeless Families with Children

Families find themselves homeless through a variety of circumstances, many of which are beyond their control. Some reasons for this displacement are divorce, domestic violence, illness, and release from a mental health or corrections institution. The basic needs of these homeless families with children are similar to those required by homeless individuals. The differences are primarily that of scale (multiple individuals in a family) and the expanded need for supportive services that encompasses both child care and a greater concentration on support of the youth sub-population.

Of the area’s twenty-two homeless agencies/organizations, only nine deal with homeless families with children. These nine organizations are located as follows: Clarendon – three, Lee – one, and Sumter – five. While almost all homeless organizations in Lee and Clarendon Counties have services for homeless families with children, only five of the seventeen agencies/organizations who deal with the homeless in Sumter County have shelter and/or supportive services for homeless families with children.

	Beds Needed	Beds Available	% of Needed Beds	Bed Gap
Clarendon	11	6	55%	5
Lee	18	6	33%	12
Sumter	190	59	31%	131
TOTAL	219	71	32%	148

Source: Homeless Housing & Gaps Analysis, Total Care Homeless Coalition – 2004

In addition to emergency and transitional housing, there is another category of housing for the homeless called permanent housing with or without supportive services. This type of housing is available for both individuals and families. During a family’s time in transitional housing, it receives extensive supportive services which enable it to become more financially stable and less dependent on support. Once the family has reached this stage, it is transferred into permanent housing. With the exception of Clarendon County, permanent housing availability for homeless families in the three-county area is almost non-existent. Neither Lee nor Sumter County has any permanent housing for homeless families with children.

The nine organizations that serve homeless families have many unmet supportive services needs. Some of these needs are job training, clothing, life skills, and child care. In addition, the specialized supportive services needed by the youth sub-population are lacking throughout the local area.

There is a structure for dealing with the services needed by the homeless (individuals and families) in these three counties. Since many of the supportive organizations in this “homeless structure” are charitable organizations, they often suffer from a lack of adequate funding to meet the services required in each of our counties. The homeless require basic services (food, shelter, medical treatment) initially, but to effectively deal with the causes and develop strategies to reverse their situation requires a vast array of supportive services.

RELIABLE, AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

Long-term indicators selected to facilitate the development of a cost effective, area-wide public transportation system to meet the needs of all citizens requiring transportation assistance.

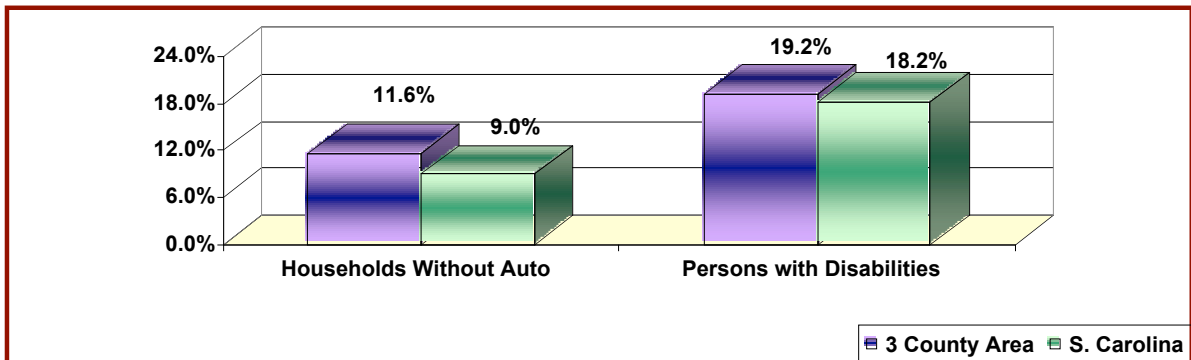
1. The area's population needing transportation assistance;
2. Public transportation rider ship.

The Area's Population Needing Transportation Assistance

This is a mobile nation that is dependent on the private automobile for its mobility. The majority of the population of these three counties relies on personal automobile(s) for almost every aspect of their economic, medical, and social welfare. However, there is a segment of our population that requires access to public or private transportation to meet the above identified needs.

This portion of the area's population requiring transportation assistance consists of persons in families without an automobile; persons aged 21 to 64 with disabilities, and disabled persons 65 years old and above. In addition to these sub-segments of the population, there are those members of households with only one automobile who are without transportation when the car is in use (driver working, etc.), and young people aged 10 to 15 who are not eligible for a driving permit or license. While there is some overlap in all these population sub-segments, it gives some idea of the numbers of people in the area requiring transportation support.

Percent of Major Sub-Population Groups Requiring Transportation Assistance



Source: U.S. Census

The need for transportation assistance is greater in the three-county area than in South Carolina in general. These local transportation needs are being addressed through a combination of expanding the capability of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) and privately-owned transportation providers. A significant initiative in this area is the proposed establishment of a Mobility Center which will coordinate transportation requests for an extended daily time period. Some of these requests will be filled by providing information on businesses which will deliver prescriptions, groceries, etc. within city or town limits. Another proposal is organizing faith-based transportation assets to fill gaps for attending church services and meeting medical appointments.

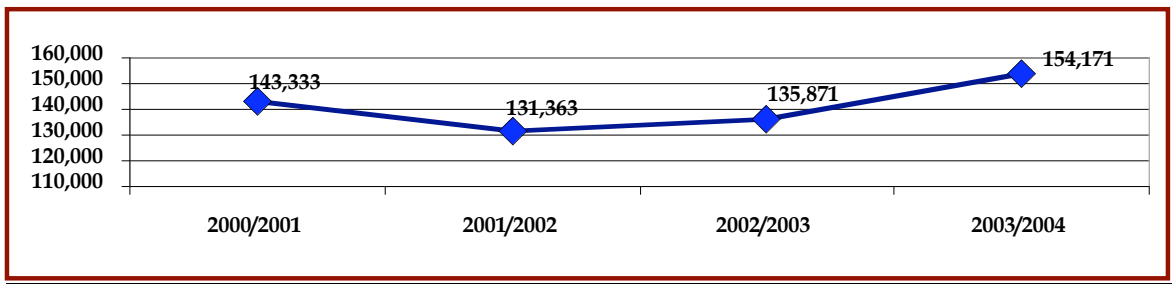
An on-going transportation requirement is the ability of people to have a reliable way to get to and from work. The proposed Mobility Center in conjunction with a Web-based initiative will attempt to deal with this important economic consideration. This will be in addition to the already existing RTA routes to Myrtle Beach and Eastover for employment purposes.

Public Transportation Rider ship

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) is the public transportation agency serving Clarendon, Lee, and Sumter Counties. The RTA provides a variety of transit services to the residents of the three-county area. These services are available to all residents, but are mainly needed and used by the economically disadvantaged of the area.

The fixed route bus service, the typical public transportation model, is presently only available in the City of Sumter. The RTA is examining the possibility of expanding fixed route service to include Manning and Bishopville twice a week. The current Sumter fixed routes were established a number of years ago. The growth of the City, through annexation and population increase may require a re-evaluation of these routes to insure that all City residents are being served.

RTA Fixed Route Rider ship 2000 - 2004

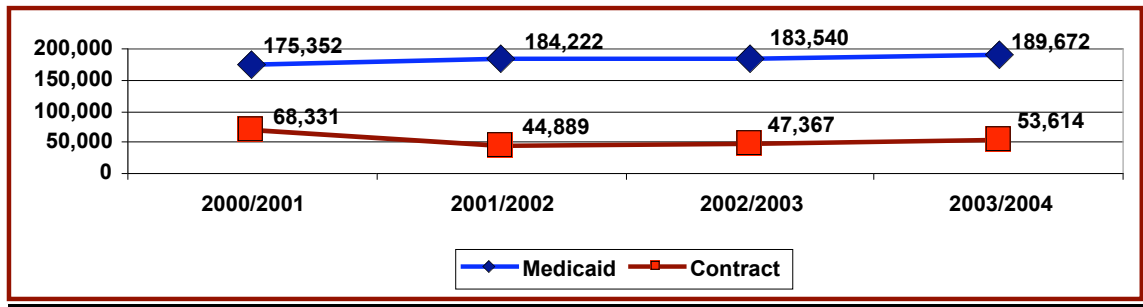


Source: Santee Wateree RTA, Progress Report 2000-2004

Since the RTA operates fixed routes from 6 AM to 6 PM five days a week, there is no evening/night service for customer shopping, entertainment, or employment. With several of the manufacturing plants operating two or three shifts and retail outlets remaining open until 9 PM, these day-time hours of operation limit the ability of some workers to use of public transportation for work.

A major aspect of the RTA's service deals with providing transportation for Medicaid and other contract services. Some of the RTA contracts are with the Aging Agencies and the Workforce Investment Board to provide transport for the elderly and those involved in job training. Medicaid customers are the primary users of our public transportation system.

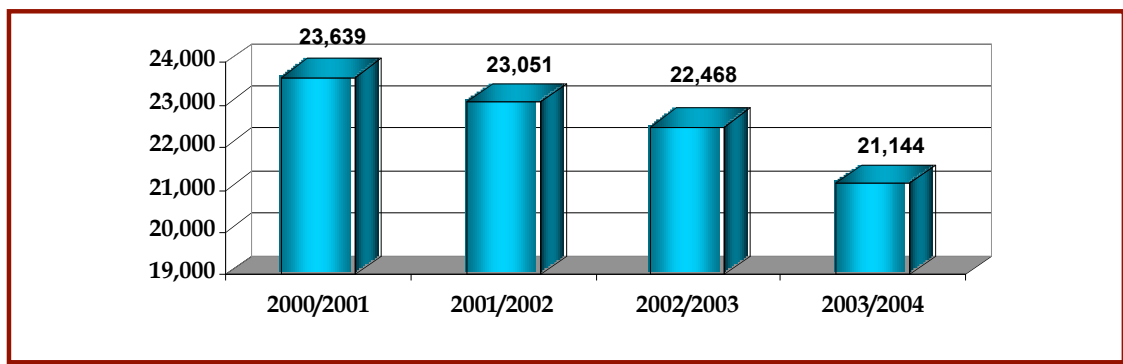
Rider ship for Medicaid/Contract Services 2000 - 2004



Source: Santee Wateree RTA, Progress Report 2000-2004

In conjunction with this contract service, the RTA offers a demand response option for residents who live in the rural areas of Sumter and all of Lee and Clarendon Counties. This option requires a person to contact the RTA 48 hours in advance to request transportation. The RTA will determine if they will have a vehicle in the area and, if so, will fill the request on a space available basis. This service costs \$2.00 for every ten miles transported and is available from 4 AM to 6 PM six days a week. This system meets the needs of some of our rural residents, but the majority of those needing transportation must rely on private carriers or friends.

RTA Demand Response Customers 2000 – 2004



Source: Santee Wateree RTA, Progress Report 2000-2004

The demand response rider ship has steadily decreased over the last four years. The reason for this decline cannot be immediately determined, but the element of chance involved with getting a space available ride may be a contributing factor.

The Regional Transportation Authority is meeting its obligations, but there are still numerous residents, particularly in the rural areas, that have no reliable transportation to meet their basic needs.

Creating Quality Education Opportunities for Pre-School Children, Youth, and Adults

Goal: To provide the complete spectrum of educational opportunities which prepare our youth to meet the challenges of the future economy and enable our current adult population to remain competitive in the world of work.

Prioritize issues that can be affected by Community actions:

- 1. Increase the number of high school graduates on an annual basis;**
- 2. Improve the educational/technical training level of the older youth and adult population to better meet the needs of the business community;**
- 3. Expand opportunities for post-secondary education and workforce development;**
- 4. Recognize the value of early childhood development for success in school and future job readiness.**

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Long-term indicators selected to increase the number of area youth who complete high school:

3. Standardized test scores;
4. High school non-completers.

Standardized Test Scores

Over the last several years, both the State of South Carolina and the Federal Government have passed legislation that requires standardized testing of public school students at all levels of K-12 education. In South Carolina, the main standardized test for the elementary school students is the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT). This test is given annually to students in grades three through eight and covers four major aspects of the curriculum. These curriculum segments are English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Students are scored using the following ratings:

- Below Basic – Did not meet standards, must have an academic assistance plan.
- Basic – Met standards, minimally prepared, can go to next grade.
- Proficient – Well prepared to work at next grade level, met expectations.
- Advanced – Very well prepared to work at next level, exceeded expectations

Currently, a student meets standards if he/she scores at the Basic level or above. The definition of Basic includes the term “minimally prepared” and therefore is not the scoring level that truly prepares our youth for the growing technical employment environment. The federal legislation “No Child Left Behind” requires that youth score at the Proficient level or above by 2014. This places a lot of pressure on the State education system to significantly upgrade the academic performance of both teachers and, ultimately, students.

Percent of Students Who Met Standards by School District - 2005

Grade	Curriculum	Clar. 1	Clar. 2	Clar. 3	Lee	Sumter 2	Sumter 17
3	English/ Lang.	85.9%	82.4%	90.9%	78.9%	89.0%	88.6%
	Mathematics	76.9%	82.6%	84.2%	65.0%	83.1%	79.9%
	Science	58.0%	59.9%	66.2%	40.1%	58.0%	56.3%
	Social Studies	84.1%	78.7%	77.9%	49.2%	72.0%	67.1%
4	English/ Lang.	63.0%	66.2%	84.6%	51.3%	80.8%	78.1%
	Mathematics	56.9%	66.7%	72.5%	52.0%	83.1%	75.9%
	Science	42.7%	41.4%	57.5%	35.4%	57.7%	53.1%
	Social Studies	61.8%	53.4%	82.5%	52.8%	72.0%	72.2%
5	English/ Lang.	65.1%	66.0%	80.0%	53.4%	80.1%	76.7%
	Mathematics	61.9%	65.0%	80.4%	48.7%	84.5%	81.5%
	Science	34.9%	40.7%	61.9%	23.7%	60.2%	52.2%
	Social Studies	47.6%	50.7%	73.2%	35.7%	65.7%	59.9%
6	English/ Lang.	31.2%	41.1%	63.6%	37.4%	56.1%	55.4%
	Mathematics	54.4%	65.9%	79.3%	70.1%	79.8%	74.4%
	Science	35.4%	34.4%	59.3%	27.4%	55.6%	47.6%

	Social Studies	39.2%	35.4%	64.8%	43.2%	58.3%	59.1%
7	English/ Lang.	61.5%	62.7%	67.6%	52.2%	70.1%	68.7%
	Mathematics	52.3%	57.4%	73.0%	45.3%	64.4%	66.3%
	Science	41.1%	47.1%	62.4%	34.6%	51.8%	62.4%
	Social Studies	36.7%	53.3%	60.9%	33.3%	44.3%	52.6%
8	English/ Lang.	63.0%	69.0%	71.4%	55.0%	71.9%	67.6%
	Mathematics	36.9%	64.8%	63.8%	48.3%	60.9%	58.3%
	Science	39.0%	51.6%	66.7%	40.6%	63.1%	52.8%
	Social Studies	35.8%	68.1%	78.3%	30.6%	57.4%	61.8%

Source: S.C. Department of Education 2005

Note: **Red** percentages identify grades where more than one-half of students **did not meet standards**.

The above Table identifies several areas requiring substantial improvement in the area's elementary education system. Over one-half of Lee County students in grades 3 through 8 did not pass the Science test. More than fifty percent (50%) of Clarendon School District One students failed to make the State standard in Science in grades 4 through 8. When the several grades throughout the region, with a low percentage of meeting standards in Mathematics and Social Studies, are added to this Science deficiency, the need for a continuing and expanding effort in elementary education is evident.

Inability to meet academic standards, particularly in middle school, frequently leads to students becoming discouraged and developing distain for learning. This is one of the major underlying causes of high school students' decisions to leave high school before graduation, thereby placing them at a great disadvantage in the world of work.

High School Non-Completers

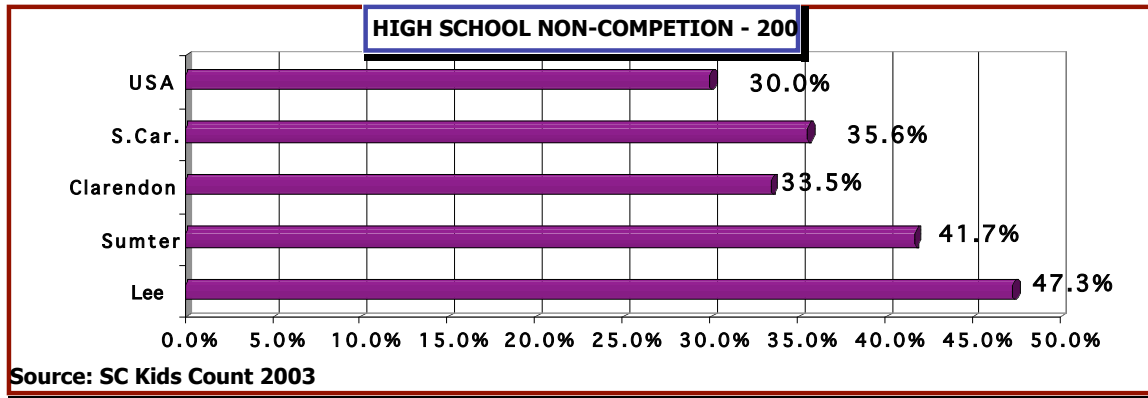
As the country becomes more reliant on technological advances in both the business and personal spheres, the value of education assumes an even greater role. As we enter the 21st Century, our nation with its universal education opportunities, major financial investment in education, and identified demand for improved education, has a high school non-completion rate of thirty percent (30%).

For purposes of this document, we will use the South Carolina Kids Count definition of non-completer/dropout: **eighth grade students not enrolled in grade 12 four years later.**

Number of Students Who Drop Out Annually (Kids Count 2003)

S. Carolina	Clarendon Co.	Lee Co.	Sumter Co.	Three-County Area
16,648	169	122	524	815

The three counties' 15 to 19 year old population accounted for 4.2% of the State's total population of 15-19 year olds in 2003, but that year's 815 dropouts in the tri-county area account for 4.9% of all dropouts in the State.



If these annual percentages continue, our counties will maintain or increase their already high rate of adults without a high school diploma. As our business community becomes more dependent on workers who can master sophisticated technology, a large segment of the local workforce will be incapable of meeting these business/industry requirements. This condition could either cost the region new business prospects or make it dependent on in-migration of workers from counties and states with more favorable high school graduation rates.

A recent study by the U.S. Department of Commerce calculated the estimated earnings, based on highest level of educational attainment, for full-time year round workers over a forty-year work life. The study concluded that a high school graduate meeting these criteria would average a minimum of \$200,000 more than a non-high school graduate over their working lives. This disposable income over an extended period can seriously affect an individual or family's quality of life and result in reduced buying power which will have a negative impact on the overall economy of our area's counties.

IMPROVE THE EDUCATIONAL/TECHNICAL TRAINING LEVEL OF THE OLDER YOUTH AND ADULT POPULATION TO BETTER MEET THE NEEDS OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Long-term indicators selected to improve the educational/training level of the area's older youth and adults:

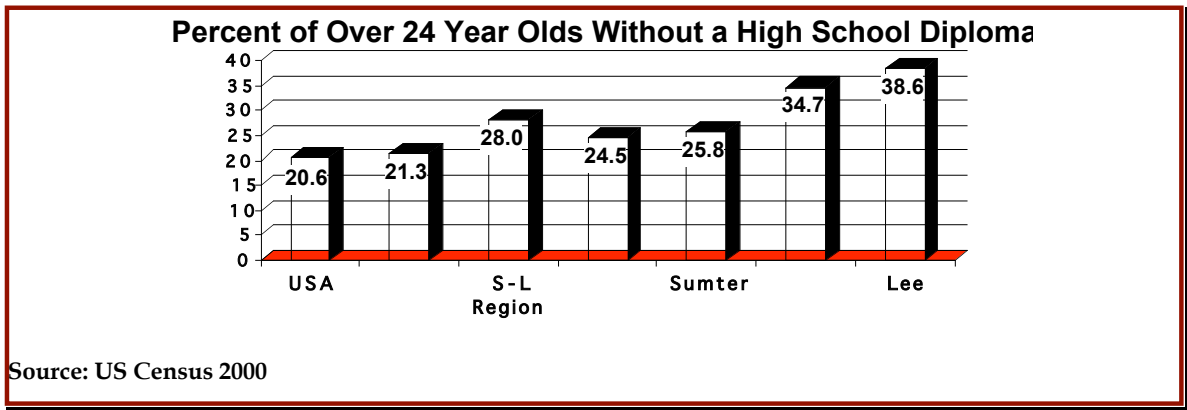
1. Education level of area's adults – 24 years of age and over;
2. Work Keys assessments and job profiles.

Education Level of Area's Adults – 24 Years of Age and Over

The role of education can not be over emphasized in the current and future economic environment. The business community is committed to incorporating technical innovations that will allow it to be competitive in the world economy. These innovations require a workforce that is not only well-grounded in the education basics, but also technically capable of meeting the increasing skills demanded of industrial investments.

The 2000 Census identified more than 13.7 million United States residents over 24 years of age who have not completed high school. This is the equivalent of the entire population of Colorado, Oregon, Nevada, and South Carolina.

In South Carolina, there are 2,533,112 people over 24 years old and approximately 540,000 do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent. In the Santee-Lynches Region 37,234 citizens over 24 years of age have not finished high school.



According to the 2000 Census, the ratio of adults who did not finish high school is:

- Nationally and in South Carolina, approximately one out of every five adults (1:5);
- In Sumter County about one out of every four adults (1:4); and
- In Clarendon and Lee Counties, more than one out of every three adults (1:3).

The high school graduation rate has improved significantly over the last twenty years. In 1980, fifty percent (50%) of the adults in the Tri-County area had not graduated from high school. The success in raising the education level of the counties' residents over this twenty-year period is attributable to the emphasis placed on graduation by both the education and business community.

This emphasis and the large increase of tax dollars dedicated to K-12 education have led to higher high school graduation rates in our counties since 1980. However, it must be realized that many of the high school non-completers in 1980 were older adults who grew up in this area when it was predominately agricultural and education played a much less important role. Therefore, the improvement in the high school graduation rate is partly attributable to the passing on of these older, less education minded generations.

While the percentage of area adults without a high school diploma has decreased, the approximately thirty-three percent (33%) of present high school students, who do not graduate, will not allow the area's percentage of under-educated adults to decline much below its currently high levels. To meet the present and future needs of industry, a high school diploma will continue to be the minimum education level acceptable for entry into many businesses. Graduation from high school allows our citizens the opportunity to qualify for entry to universities, technical colleges, community colleges, and other types of technical training. These higher levels of education and technical training are

becoming more essential in all segments of business and industry. Unless we can increase participation in adult education and reduce the dropout rate of our high schools, the three-county area will be deprived of those industries that can significantly improve the economic well-being of our workforce families and the development of the area's communities.

Work Keys Assessments and Job Profiles

The Nation's business-restructuring continues unabated. This restructuring is driven by globalization, technical change/innovation, and a rise of more complex work and organizational environment. In this environment, the need for an education standard that insures youth and adults are prepared for real jobs in the real world is essential. In the past, this standard has been the high school diploma. Unfortunately, in many businesses the credibility of a high school diploma has diminished. This loss of credibility is because there is no national standard for the diploma. Some school systems award diplomas on social, rather than solely academic criteria, and there are various levels of completion certificates which students interpret as diplomas. The high school diploma is still valuable in many instances, particularly as an entry point to post-secondary education and training. However, there is a growing need in business for an educational standard for entry into the workforce.

A credible candidate for a new education standard that insures students and employees are adequately trained for high-skilled, high wage jobs is Work Keys. Work Keys is an employment-oriented assessment tool developed by ACT that measures the skills employers believe are essential to job success. The skills Work Keys measures are: Applied Mathematics, Applied Technology, Business Writing, Listening, Locating Information, Observation, Reading for Information, Teamwork, and Writing. The system is centered on two interactive components - job profiling and individual assessments. Work Keys' first component, job profiling, is used by business to analyze the skills needed for a particular job and to describe those skills to a potential or current employee. The job profile also permits educators to evaluate how well they are preparing students for the world of work. The assessment is the second component of the system and measures an individual's ability in one or a combination of the nine assessment subjects.

The job profile assigns a numerical score to the appropriate skill value needed for the job. The assessment awards a numerical score for the individual's ability in each of the nine assessed measures. The numerical scores are 1 through 9. Job "A" may require a 5 in Reading for Information, a 4 in Applied Technology, and a 4 in Teamwork. If a potential employee applying for Job "A" has the required or higher scores in these three skills he/she is eligible for that job. If an individual's score is lower in one or more of the skills required, Key Train or WIN, Work Key's related training software, is available to help the individual close the gap between his/her score and job the value measure, and qualifications for the job.

Number of Job Profiles* and Assessments in Tri-County Area 2000-2005

Job Profiles Completed	Job Profiles Underway	Total Job Profiles**	Assessments	Job Profile to Assessment Ratio
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72	20	92	23,000+	1 : 250
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Source: Central Carolina Technical College, Continuing Education & Workforce 2005

Notes: * A Job profile does not analyze an individual job, but a job title which can be as many as 20 or more jobs.

** Total profiles do not include the replications (profile completed twice) of these profiles which is necessary to insure Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) compliance.

The growth of technologically-based business and industry demands highly productive workers who can continue to grow in skill-level and adapt to new procedures. A skilled, professional labor force now plays a growingly important role in cultivating a vibrant local economy. Work Keys offers one of the best opportunities to measure the ability of the local labor force and determine if it meets the needs of the information-based economy. It also provides that portion of the three-county labor force which does not meet the employment standards of business, an opportunity to close the knowledge gap via Key Train and Win.

The Work Keys assessment component of student assessing in the tri-county School Districts is close to meeting needs of the area. The assessing of adults (dislocated workers, welfare recipients, and ex-offenders) is not at a level that meets the needs of the counties' workforce. There is a shortfall in the number of job profiles as is evident from the profile-to-assessment-ratio. Due to the cost of profiles, most of the profiles have been performed in the major employment companies in the area. There is a need to expand the profiling capability to small-to-medium employers since they provide the largest number of jobs in the three-county area.

EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES FOR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Long-term indicators selected to develop a more skilled workforce and to improve youth opportunities to access post-secondary education;

1. Skills needed in the current and future workforce;
2. College entry tests – SAT and ACT results.

Skills Needed in the Current and Future Workforce

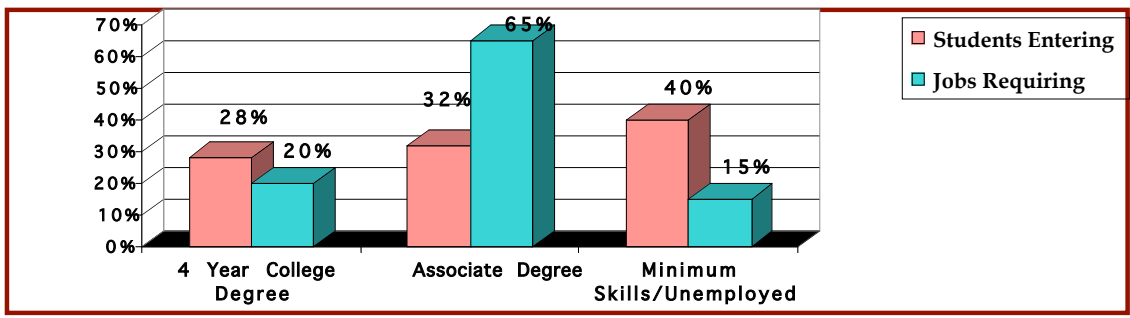
The need for the local labor force to possess both historic and new technological workplace skills can not be over emphasized. The historic skills are what has been termed the work ethic (meeting time requirements, being reliable, being honest, getting along with others, etc.). In addition to the work ethic, there is still a standing requirement for employees to be able to read, do business math, and be capable of writing at a level that can express ideas. While these workplace skills may be historic, it does not mean that they are automatically possessed by current or future employees. We have discussed in previous portions of this document mechanisms that are available to learn and enhance these important skills.

This section concentrates on technical skills required by the future workforce. The term technical skills are all inclusive of academic, technical, and scientific knowledge. The demands for these technical skills in the workplace are growing at an expeditious pace.

This accelerated growth of the knowledge skills will continue well into the mid Twenty-First Century.

A large percentage of students and graduates of the current education and training communities are not equipped for successful careers in the 21st Century workplace. Part of this shortfall is the education levels achieved by the area’s older youth or young adults. In *Workforce 2020: Workers of the 21st Century* by Carol D’Amico, the author states that nation-wide, a great number of Associate Degrees or advanced training graduates are needed now and there is a growing demand for these individuals by 2020. Even if these percentages are somewhat high, they speak to the need for State and local educators to foster higher education by providing the means to achieve this education level.

South Carolina Students’ Future Education Goals vs. Skill Level Required



Source: Pathways to Prosperity, Governor’s Workforce Education Task Force 2001

The number of students within the State going on to four-year degrees meets the needs of business. The business community’s need for employees with an Associate Degree or advanced training is not being met. It is forecast that by 2020 only about fifty percent (50%) of employees with this level of education will be available in the workplace. As addressed previously, the major deficit in the current and particularly the future workforce is the large percentage of under-educated youth with the corresponding small percentage of overall jobs for which these individuals are qualified. This significant workforce gap must be addressed by all levels of leadership in our communities. Local educators, business leaders, and county and municipal government leaders are pivotal in addressing this education gap. This does not relieve parents or the students themselves from their responsibility to prepare for the future.

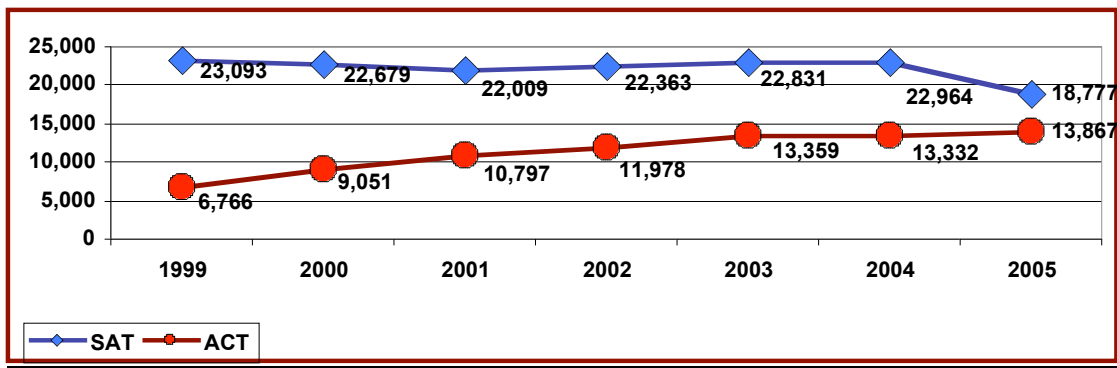
It is important to expand the educational opportunities offered at USC-Sumter, Morris College, and Central Carolina Technical College, as well as at St Leo’s College and Troy State University. While the local post-secondary education institutions are not the only avenue to higher education, they provide a convenient venue for the less affluent youth of the Tri-County population to achieve a College or Associate Degree. If the leaders of these institutions are not being included in key planning aspects of local K-12 education upgrades and workforce development, the area’s leadership should consider seeking their input , particularly as to weakness discerned in entering college freshman.

College Entry Tests – SAT and ACT Results

The two specialized tests that students can use to qualify for college entry are the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the American College Test (ACT). These two college admission tests differ in their focus. The SAT is based more on logic and analysis, while the ACT is more curriculum-oriented.

South Carolina is one of 24 states that use the SAT as the main measure for college entrance exams. The remaining twenty-six states use the other nation-wide test, the ACT, for college admission. Although the SAT is a higher stakes measure of high school quality and is part of the South Carolina formula for awarding LIFE Scholarships, the ACT continues to gain popularity among students in the State’s public high schools. A major reason for this shift toward the ACT is that some South Carolina students feel more comfortable being tested by a curriculum-driven examination.

Number of S.C. Students Taking SAT and ACT (1999-2005)



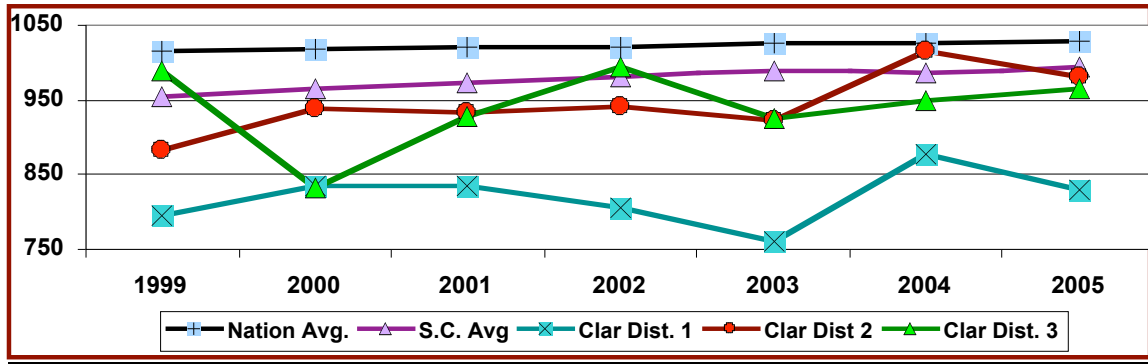
Source: South Carolina Department of Education

This trend is even more pronounced in the Tri-County School Districts, where in 2005 students took 531 ACT exams and only 488 SAT tests.

The SAT: The current SAT-1, a revised version of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), is composed of two parts - a verbal test and a mathematics test. Each test has a maximum score of 800 points, with the first 200 points of each test awarded for taking the test. A perfect composite SAT (the combined total of both verbal and math scores) is 1600.

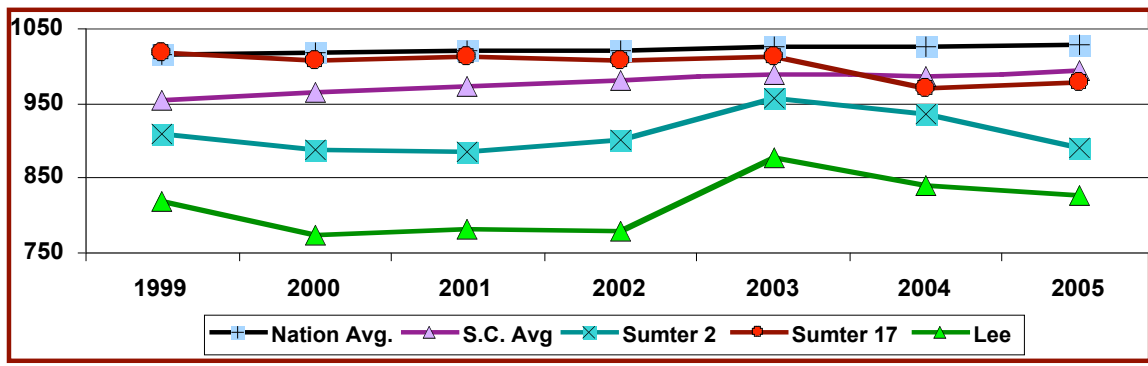
Overall, South Carolina is still struggling to achieve parity with other states in SAT scoring. While its composite score has significantly improved over the last six years, its average composite score remains at the bottom of the states that use the SAT for college admission. The composite score is the total of the verbal and mathematics test scores. The National average SAT composite score is considered a baseline against which states and school districts are compared. The national average should not be confused with the SAT score needed by a student for admission to a particular college.

SAT Average Composite Score-Nation, S.C., & Clarendon School Districts-2005



Source: S.C. Department of Education

SAT Average Composite Score-Nation, S.C., Sumter, & Lee Sch. Districts-2005



Source: S.C. Department of Education

As the above two graphics show, several of the School Districts in the three-county area have been consistently below the South Carolina average over the last seven years. Only Sumter School District 17's students have maintained an average SAT composite score above or near the S. C. average over this period. Even Sumter 17's students have not met the State average composite score in the past two years. Low SAT score averages have a direct impact on the number of local seniors accepted into four-year colleges.

The average composite scores by sex and racial categories also impacts the ability of members of certain of these categories to qualify for the LIFE Scholarships instituted under the South Carolina Education Lottery. One of the key provisions of qualifying for a LIFE Scholarship is a composite SAT score of at least 1,100 for a freshman entering a four-year college or university in 2004. In this mainly rural area with a large percentage of minority students, financial assistance in the form of scholarships is essential for many of the area's youth to attend post-secondary education.

S.C. Students Meeting the SAT Requirement for Life Scholarships - 2004

	All Students	Females	Males	African-Amer.	Whites
Students Tested	18,595	10,443	8,152	4,619	10,542
Students Meeting Requirement	5,419	2,573	2,846	322	3,846
Percent Meeting	29.1%	24.6%	34.9%	7.0%	36.5%

Requirement					
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Source: S.C. Department of Education

State-wide, approximately three out of every ten students taking the SAT qualify for a LIFE Scholarship. There are major disparities, however, when we look at sub-categories of South Carolina’s test-taking population. As an example, more than one in three white test-takers meet the SAT qualification for the LIFE Scholarship, while only one in fourteen African-American test-takers achieve the 1,100 composite score.

The ACT: The ACT consists of four (4) tests – English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning. The ACT uses an adjusted average of the 4 tests to arrive at the composite score used for college entry. The highest score for each of the tests is 36.

In 2005, all the Tri-County School Districts with the exception of Clarendon #3 scored well below the S.C. average in all ACT subject areas as reflected by the composite score. While Clarendon #3’s scores were very competitive; however, it must be noted that only eight seniors from the school took the ACT.

2005 ACT Scores by Subject Area – U.S., S.C., and Local School Districts

Group	English	Mathematics	Reading	Science Reasoning	Composite
US Overall Avg.	20.4	20.7	21.3	20.9	20.9
SC Overall Avg.	18.8	19.3	19.6	19.3	19.4
Clarendon #3	20.5	19.5	20.4	19.8	20.3
Sumter #17	17.9	17.9	18.7	18.8	18.4
Clarendon #2	17.2	17.8	17.9	18.6	18.0
Clarendon #1	17.4	17.2	16.8	17.3	17.3
Sumter #2	16.4	17.0	17.2	17.8	17.2
Lee	13.7	14.8	14.0	15.7	14.6

Source: S.C. Department of Education

According to ACT, Inc.’s “National Summary Report for 2005”, most of the South Carolina average scores are below those that indicate adequate preparation for typical entry-level college courses. The Report states that the typical cut-off score needed for a student to have at least a fifty percent (50%) chance of receiving a “B” in entry level English = 18, College Algebra = 22, and Biology = 24. A student with lower scores “may need additional academic preparation to be successful in these typical college entry-level courses”, according to the ACT Report.

With the exception of Clarendon District #3 and Sumter District 17, all remaining Districts in the Region were in the bottom 50% of School District ACT averages Statewide. Only one School District Statewide had a lower ACT average composite score than the Lee School District.

The ACT evaluates ACT subject and composite scores for students taking “core or more” versus students taking “core or less”. A “core or more” student program is: four years of English; three or more years of specified mathematics; courses, three or more years of Social Studies to include History, Government, Geography, and Psychology; and three

years or more of Natural Science to include General, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and earth Science. A “less than core” program refers to a high school student’s program consisting of fewer courses than those outlined above.

Comparison of Students Taking and Not Taking ACT Core Curriculum (2004)

Group	Core or More					Core or Less				
	Eng.	Math	Read	Sci.	Comp.	Eng.	Math	Read	Sci.	Comp.
Nation	21.6	21.7	22.2	21.7	21.9	18.8	19.1	19.8	19.6	19.5
S. C.	19.4	19.7	20.1	19.7	19.8	17.4	18.2	18.4	18.4	18.2
S.C. Black	17.1	17.4	17.7	17.9	17.7	15.0	16.0	16.1	19.6	16.1
S.C White	22.6	22.4	23.2	22.5	22.8	19.9	19.9	20.8	20.5	20.4

Source: S.C. Department of Education

Students who completed or planned to complete core class work scored higher than students who did not, and South Carolina white students had higher average scores than African-American students. Significantly, white students who did not complete or plan to complete core coursework had higher average scores than African-American students who completed or plan to complete core class work.

Despite a growing preference for the ACT by local high school students, the 2005 results show that the area’s students, as a group, are faring no better in this curriculum-based ACT than they do in the more logic and analysis based SAT.

As the nation’s economy becomes more dependent on a highly skilled workforce, advanced education will play a larger role in the economic development of both individuals and communities. In this largely rural area with a high percentage of minority youth, the “need to increase post-secondary educational opportunities for high school students is essential. Local educators, in consort with business and government leaders, must use all available means to provide academic opportunities for the maximum number of local youth. These efforts must ensure that high school seniors are more competitive in both SAT and ACT scoring and college admissions, while also qualifying for LIFE and other academic scholarships. Unless a much larger portion of our high school graduates have the academic foundation and financial wherewithal for advanced education, the Tri-Counties’ future ability to compete economically with other areas within and outside South Carolina will be seriously degraded.

RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT FOR SUCCESS IN SCHOOL AND FUTURE JOB READINESS

Long-term indicators selected to identify the value of pre-school development and readiness of children for the first grade and beyond:

1. Young children in low income families;
2. Testing measures to determine children’s readiness for first grade.

Young Children in Low Income Families

Over the past several years, research has confirmed the importance of early childhood care and educational experiences. Children develop at a tremendous rate during their first few years of life and high quality care and education during this crucial period fosters a child’s successful growth.

There is a direct correlation between a child from an economically disadvantaged family and that child’s preparedness to enter school. A large percentage of these economically disadvantaged children reside in single female head of household families. While there are several reasons that a child may not be ready for school (health issues, parent literacy, and a stable environment), a major factor is that the parent(s) work and are not available to effectively contribute to the child’s care and learning. Over sixty-two percent of South Carolina’s children under 6 years old live in families where either a single parent or both parents work.

From a national perspective, rural poverty rates have been at their lowest level since 1980. However, the South’s non-metro areas still face markedly higher poverty and lower income than other regions of the Nation. Our rural three-county area has a poverty rate that exceeds the South Carolina rate by between two and nine percent, depending on the County. Poverty is predominately prevalent among the minority populations of the Tri-County area.

Poverty Rates by Ethnic Group - 2000

	South Carolina	Clarendon	Lee	Sumter
Overall Poverty Rate	14.1	23.1	21.8	16.2
White Population	8.6	11.2	6.9	6.9
Afr-Amer Population	26.4	32.1	30.7	26.5
Hispanic Population	25.4	53.6	15.3	24.6

Source: U.S. Census 2000

These high rates of overall poverty translate into a large number of families with children living at or below the poverty level. **Approximately one out of every four families with children under five in this area’s counties lives in poverty.** The poverty level is an income at which a family needs public monetary and service assistance to subsist. However, there are a significant number of people who have an income that is less than half the poverty level income. These people are identified as being in severe poverty and there were over 1,500 children age 5 and under in the area’s counties in 2000.

Children Living In Severe Poverty - 2000

	Clarendon	Lee	Sumter
Children 5 years & Younger	403	227	1,261

Source: U.S. Census 2000

The above data establishes that the Tri-County area has a large number of preschool children who live in economic distress. The State of South Carolina has enacted legislative initiatives to better prepare young children for the first grade and subsequent public education. The major legislative initiative was the establishment of mandatory

full-day Kindergarten for every child in the state. In addition, the Early Childhood Development and Academic Assistance ACT of 1993 requires all school districts to provide at least one-half day of early childhood development programs for four-year-olds who have indicated significant readiness deficiencies. There is also the option, at the discretion of the school district, to expand these programs to three-year-olds.

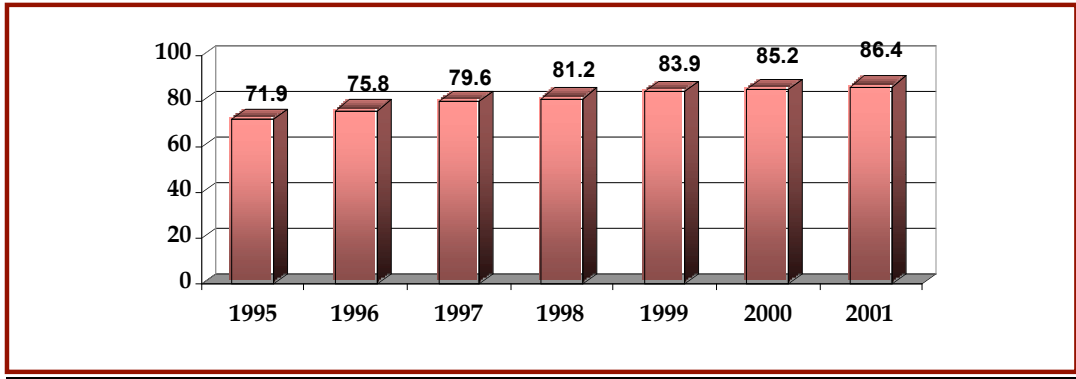
A growing number of non-profit, privately financed, and government organizations/agencies are dedicated to improving the physical, social, and academic development of these "at risk" pre-schoolers. Many of these organizations spend a portion of their funding educating parents to better assist their young children. The many good pre-school programs, under the direction of several different government departments and non-profits, are often not adequately coordinated to meet the needs of all the "at risk" five-and-under age group.

Testing Measures to Determine Children's Readiness for First Grade

Without student assessment, no school district can know whether all children in pre-school and kindergarten programs are ready for the next level. Unless teachers know their children's deficiencies, they can not develop learning experiences to help them. In 1978, South Carolina enacted legislation that required all public school students be administered a readiness assessment at the beginning of the first grade. Within three years, the State adopted the Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery (CSAB) as the measurement tool for determining readiness for first grade. The results of this assessment were used to inform teachers and parents of each child's needs and to track results statewide.

The CSAB is administered individually to each student. The test is not timed and includes a wide variety of non-reading areas. While it was in use, the CSAB identified a steady improvement in South Carolina's children's readiness for first grade.

South Carolina CSAB Results – Percent of Students Ready for First Grade

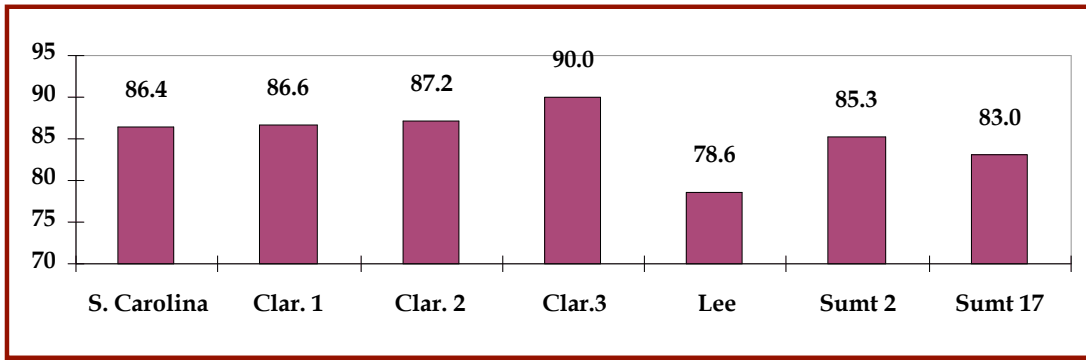


Source: South Carolina Department of Education

The last CSAB testing cycle was 2001. In that year 49,451 students were tested statewide. The ethnicity results of this testing cycle were that the following percentages of each race/ethnic group were tested as ready for first grade: White students-91.8%, African-American students-81.0%, Asian students-83.8%, Native American students-78.2%, and Hispanic students-63.2%. These results appear to bolster the conclusion that since the poverty level is most prevalent in the African-American and Hispanic segments of our population, these children require more assistance in preparing for formal education.

Locally, the 2001 CSAB results were mixed depending on School District.

Tri-County Students CSAB Results by School District - 2001



Source: South Carolina Department of Education

The CSAB was replaced in 2001 by the South Carolina Readiness Assessment (SCRA). The SCRA had been piloted for school years 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 and was first formally used during the 2002-2003 school year. The South Carolina Readiness Assessment spans both kindergarten and first grade and is composed of three areas of evaluation: Personal & Social Development, English & Language Arts, and Mathematics. A major difference in the CSAB and the SCRA is that the SCRA is not an accountability tool and has no "ready"/"not ready" cutoff point.

The SCRA is conducted in two mutually dependent phases. There is a classroom data collection plan and an on-line ratings checklist. The checklist rating is conducted twice a

year - winter and end of school. There are three possible ratings for each indicator on the checklist. They apply to the skills and abilities associated with each indicator and are: 1) Rarely or Never Demonstrates; 2) Sometimes Demonstrates; 3) Consistently Demonstrates.

The SCRA, while not an accountability tool, may in the future provide sufficient data so that it can be used to improve the curriculum. The difference between the CSAB and the SCRA is that the CSAB is an objective assessment, while the SCRA is dependent on the teacher's observations in consultation with the SCRA development guidelines. This does not mean the SCRA is not a valid measurement tool, since when it is used with the students' documented progress (work portfolio) it can result in a high degree of accuracy.

Economic Development, Jobs, and Community Economic Revitalization

Goal: To stimulate the growth of the Tri-County area's economy by recruiting more technologically oriented business and industry with the resulting establishment of higher paying jobs and improved quality of life for the area's residents.

Prioritize issues that can be affected by Community actions:

- 1. Increase the number of new job opportunities - both manufacturing and non-manufacturing industries;**
- 2. Improve individual and family measures of income;**
- 3. Encourage civic engagement that attracts business and industrial investors;**
- 4. Promote Central Business Districts and satellite shopping sites area-wide.**

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF NEW JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN BOTH MANUFACTURING AND NON-MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

Long-term indicators selected to identify industries' capital investment in the area and the number of jobs established as a result of this investment:

5. Capital Investment in the Tri-County area;
6. New job creation as a result of investment.

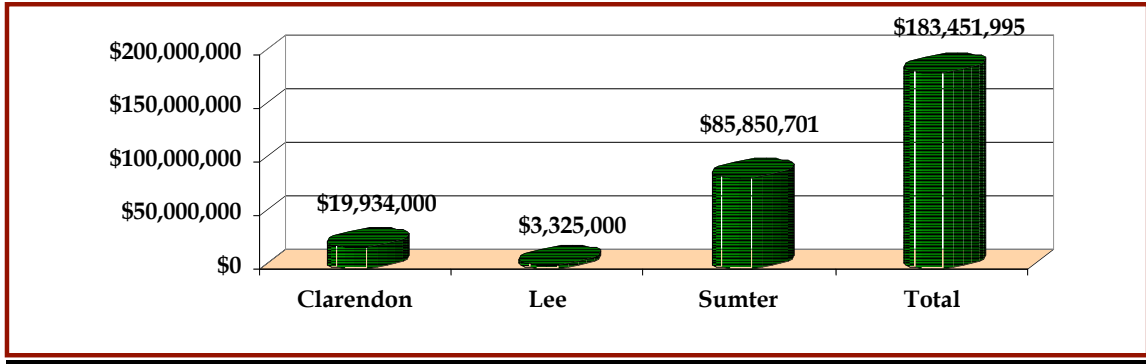
Capital Investment

An area's economic development is, in part, dependent upon industries' capital investment in the area. While capital investment of businesses is an important ingredient in a region's economic growth, it is often overshadowed by the loss of businesses and industries that were already up and running in the area. Unfortunately, in the tri-county area the loss of existing industries is having a much larger impact on the economy than new capital investment in the area.

From 2002 to 2005, several major industries in the three-county area closed down operations. In addition, a number of other industries throughout the region experienced lay-offs. Some of these plant closures and lay-offs affected some of the area's largest employers, in such categories as automotive, textile, and furniture manufacturing. The loss of these major manufacturing operations has seriously impacted the economic growth of this area.

Despite the loss of these major industries there has been some new capital investment in the three counties. A total of seven industries from 2002 to 2004 made either new capital investments or invested in expansions of existing businesses in Clarendon, Lee, and Sumter Counties.

Capital Investment in the Tri-County Area 2002 - 2004



Source: S. C. Department of Commerce 2005

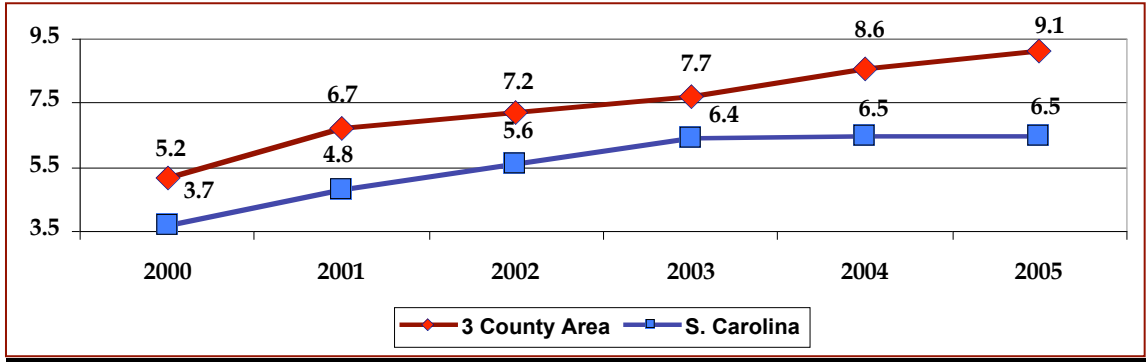
In addition to the capital investment of major manufacturers and/or employers, there are two important vehicles for economic growth in this market area. The first is the establishment or expansion of small to medium business (business franchises and entrepreneurial startups). In this economic growth category, the three-county area is expanding at a much greater pace than the area's capital investment, at least at this point in time. The second economic growth vehicle is perhaps the most important to the region and that is the continued expansion of Shaw Air Force Base. Now that Shaw AFB has survived the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (2005 BRAC) Commission and actually gained personnel with the transfer of a U.S. Army headquarters to the Base, Shaw's impact on the economy of the area is even more profound. Shaw contributes between thirty to thirty-five percent of the Sumter economy and has a marked effect on the economies of the two rural counties – Clarendon and Lee.

The need for a significant increase in capital investment area-wide is evident to all of the three counties' leaders. Without some large employers requiring more technologically skilled employees moving into the area, the economic well-being of the area will continue to trail many parts of South Carolina. The relatively merger capital investment combined with the industry losses for the three-year period (2002 – 2004) has resulted in the area's economy moving ahead at a minimum growth rate. If this situation continues for any extended period of time the local economy will stagnate and the residents' standard of living will suffer.

New Job Creation as a Result of Investment

An area's level of employment is a major indicator of its economic viability. In order for any economy to prosper there must be enough jobs in and around the geographic area to keep the unemployment level of its residents at a relatively low level. While there is no formula for a reasonable level of unemployment, an accepted unemployment measure is the average unemployment rate for the State or Nation in which the area exists.

Average Unemployment Rate Trends 2000-2005*



Source: S.C. Employment Security Commission

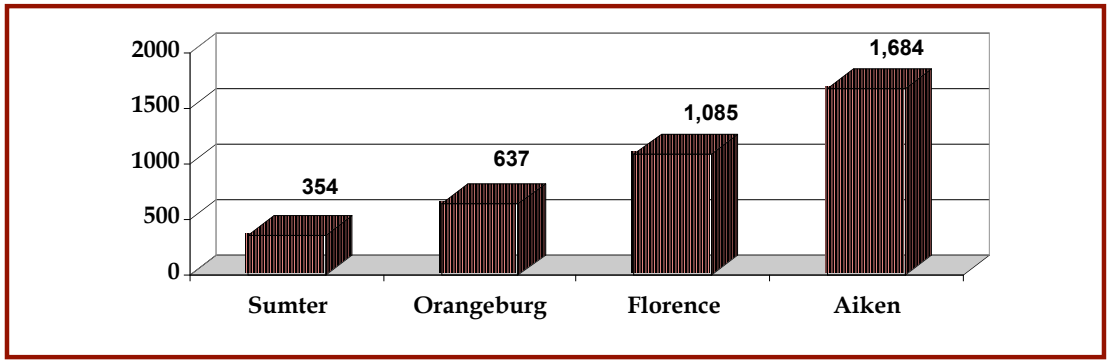
***Note: The 2005 average unemployment rate is for the first 9 months of the year.**

While both South Carolina's and the Tri-County area's average unemployment rate has increased over this six-year period, the local area's unemployment has grown at a faster rate. More importantly, the average unemployment rate for the three counties has continued to increase over the last two years, while the State's unemployment rate has remained static.

The increasing rate of unemployment in this area is a source of great concern, but it is not the only job related problem facing the area. The pay scales for these three counties are below the South Carolina norm. A factor contributing to the lower wages in the area is the relatively low number of skilled workers needed in the Counties' industrial base. With less numbers of technologically skilled workers available, major manufacturers are more reluctant to establish facilities in the three-county area.

Capital investment by industries usually results in additional jobs for a municipality or county. The individual counties in the region have all experienced new job creation as a result of industrial investment in the 2002-2004 time frame. Lee and Clarendon Counties' job growth as a result of capital investment was around the mean for rural counties in South Carolina. Sumter County, a more urban MSA, saw significantly less job growth than like counties with a central/core city.

Numbers of Jobs by Capital Investment 2002 - 2004



Source: S.C. Department of Commerce

The region's job growth, particularly in Sumter County, has been at best static over the past three to five years. The exodus of several major manufacturers has resulted in the loss of over 1,000 jobs. Many of these lost manufacturing jobs were in the higher wage category. The importance of recruiting major employers in the more technological industries can not be over-emphasized. Any influx of high skilled industry can only take place if the area's workforce has the sufficient education and training to meet the skill levels required by these high tech industries.

IMPROVE INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY MEASURES OF INCOME

Long-term indicators selected to develop initiatives to increase the personal income of the area's residents in order to provide area families with an improved quality of life:

1. Per Capita Income – a valuable economic indicator of an area's wealth;
2. Median Family Income – a gauge of a community's economic well-being.

Per Capita Income

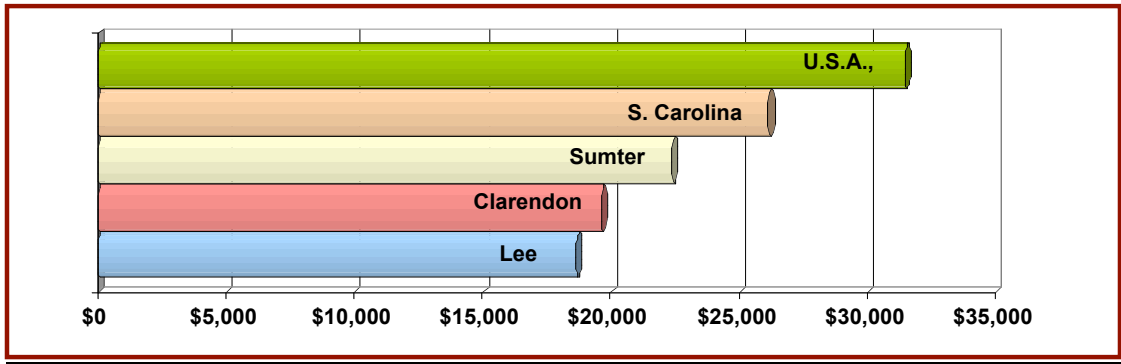
Per Capita Personal Income (PCPI) is a valuable statistical measure of both state and local economies. PCPI is defined as the total personal income of the residents of a geographic area divided by the total population of that area. The personal income referred to in this definition includes the total wages, interest income, federal payments, retirement income, and rent of the population of an area.

South Carolina's per capita personal income has languished well behind the national and regional averages since this economic measure was adopted. In 2004, South Carolina was ranked 44th out of the fifty states and the District of Columbia and tenth out of the thirteen states in the Southeast Region.

A contributing factor to the relatively low South Carolina per capita personal income is the State's high percentage of rural population. The rural impact on income affects the State's overall income figures and further limits the per capita personal income for the more rural areas of the State, such as the Tri-County area. The three county area's rural nature affects its actual personal income. Residents of rural areas usually have lower wages, less disposable income for investments, and fewer jobs that have benefits, especially retirement programs. The lower wages result in less Social Security income for those who reach the qualifying age for this government transfer program.

Another factor affecting the area's Per Capita Personal Income is the comparatively low wage levels found throughout the region. This phenomenon is as prevalent in the urban area of Sumter County as it is in the sparsely populated portions of Lee and Clarendon Counties. An area of low wage levels and a large amount of government transfer payments is not a prime candidate for economic growth.

Per Capita Personal Income 2003



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis

Within the Tri-County area, Sumter County, while a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), has a PCPI that is approximately \$9,000 per person below the United States average. The two most rural counties in the Region are significantly below the national average. Clarendon County's PCPI trailed the national average PCPI by \$12,000 and was approximately sixty-two percent (62%) of the United States average. Lee County's per capita income is \$13,000 below the nation's and only accounted for fifty-nine percent (59%) of the U.S. average PCPI. Lee County has not only the lowest per capita personal income in the area, but is one of the five lowest ranked counties in the State. These figures mean that for every \$100 of income for the average American, residents of Clarendon or Lee Counties have only \$62 to \$59 of income respectively.

Lower per capita personal income results in a lower standard of living for the residents of the overall area, as well as for each of the individual counties. Without extensive economic development, the counties of the Tri-County region will continue to fall further behind the average national individual income level.

Median Family Income

The average annual increase of median family income nationwide is slowing and that does not bode well for families in the tri-county area. Median family income is one of the best income measures available, since it indicates how well the average family is doing financially. The measurement is the *median*, which means one-half the families have lower incomes and one-half the families have higher incomes than the number cited. For the purpose of this measurement, a family is defined as two or more related individuals living in the same household. While there is no limit on how many family members live in a household, the type of family seriously affects the level of median income. In 2000, almost forty-eight percent (48%) of all families were two wage-earner married couples, while the percent of one-earner married couples dropped to just over twenty-nine percent (29%). The remaining twenty-three percent (23%) of families were single-parent heads of household of which the vast majority were single female heads of households. The median income of the female heads of families dropped from \$27,553 to \$26,550 in 2003.

During the first five years of the 21st Century, many middle income families' income fell in relation to inflation due to a contraction of employment opportunities in the labor market. This labor market contraction was the result of increased unemployment and fewer working hours for those family members who were employed. Minority families lost income in the 2000 to 2003 downturn three times as fast as whites: -1.5% for blacks and -2.3% for Hispanics compared to -0.5 for whites. While this situation has eased in the last year, this slower growth of median incomes means that today's working families' living standards are improving at a lower rate as they age when compared to earlier generations.

The area's large number of minority families, many of which are single female head of households, negatively impacts the three counties ability for a high level of median family income growth.

Median Family Income Comparison - Area, State, and Nation (1999 & 2005)

Jurisdiction	1999	2005	Average Annual Growth	Share of 1999 U.S. Income	Share of 2005 U.S. Income
Clarendon Co.	\$33,951	\$40,350	3.1%	67.8%	64.3%
Lee Co.	\$34,209	\$40,500	3.1%	68.4%	64.6%
Sumter Co.	\$38,970	\$45,950	3.0%	77.9%	73.2%
S. Carolina	\$44,227	\$52,250	3.0%	88.4%	83.3%
U.S.A.	\$50,046	\$62,732	4.2%	N/A	N/A

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis.

The State of South Carolina and the three-county area all trailed the national median family income average growth by over one percent annually during this six year period. While the two more rural counties' median family income grew at a slightly higher rate than Sumter County and the State, families in these counties still lost ground in relation to the national average. Families in Lee and Clarendon Counties had an average median income of \$22,000 less than the national average. This translates into these rural families income averaging about one-third below the nationwide median family income. In Sumter County the median family income was almost \$17,000 below the nations or only about three-quarters of the national average. While the State's median family income is closer to the national average, as a share of the national average the State ended five percent lower in 2005 than it began in 1999.

Although the State of South Carolina has seen a significant median family income drop in relation to the nation since 1999, the individual counties in this area have, on average, faired worse. Since in 1999, the three counties trailed the State average median family income by \$5,000 to \$10,000, by 2005 this gap had expanded to \$6,000 to \$12,000.

The need to improve the income levels of both individuals and families in the three-county area can not be over-emphasized. When families, particularly in the rural districts of the counties, average 12 to 22 thousand dollars less in income than State and National averages, the ability of rural families to experience a decent quality of life with a reasonable amount of disposable income is severely limited.

ENCOURAGE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THAT ATTRACTS BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL INVESTORS

Long-term indicators selected to track community actions that identify the area's residents' civic engagement:

1. Voter Participation - as a measure of citizen involvement in local and national policy making;
2. Caring Index – support for non-profit organizations.

Voter Participation

The term "civic engagement" includes a wide variety of community actions taken by businesses, industries, and individuals. These civic activities include community projects, cultural activities, volunteering for local organizations, attending city/county council meetings and voting in elections, to name just a few. Voting in national, state, and local elections is a civic responsibility and the number of citizens who register for and vote in elections is a definitive measure of civic engagement.

The three-county area has a total of 104 voting precincts and had over 90,000 registered voters in 2004. The 2004 national election saw an upsurge in the number of South Carolina citizens, 18 years or older, who voted in the election. The local area also saw an increase in voters during this election, but did not match the voting rate of the State.

Voter Registration and Turnout in the 2004 National Election

	Precincts	Registered Voters	Number Who Voted	Percent Voted
Clarendon	26	21,134	13,791	65.25%
Lee	24	12,010	8,147	67.83%
Sumter	54	58,598	38,546	65.78%
Tri-Counties	104	91,742	60,484	65.93%
S. Carolina	1,981	2,315,182	1,631,148	70.45%

Source: Voter Registration Office; Clarendon, Lee, and Sumter Counties 2004

The total percentage of the three-county registered voters who voted in the 2004 national election was almost five percent (5%) lower than the South Carolina average percentage. Lee County, the most rural county in the area, had the area's highest percentage of registered voters who went to the polls. While it did not meet the State norm, Lee County's voter turnout was commendable for such a small, relatively poor, rural county. By comparison, Clarendon and Sumter Counties' voter turnout was significantly below the South Carolina average. There were several precincts in Sumter County that had a voter turnout which exceeded 80%. Unfortunately, there were other precincts that had below 50% voter turnout and one precinct that had less than 30% of the registered voters participate in the election. Voter participation in Clarendon County precincts averaged between fifty-five percent and seventy-five percent.

Even though the area's voter participation in 2004 did not match the State average, the fact that two-thirds of registered voters actually went to the polls and voted speaks highly of the civic involvement of the area's citizens. This voter participation will undoubtedly increase in proportion to growing impact of national, state, and local issues on the lives of the area's citizens.

Caring Index

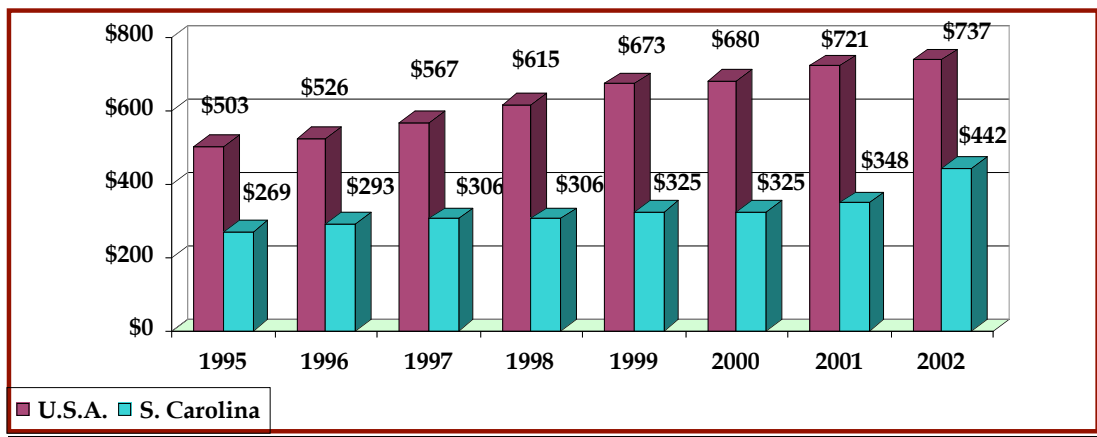
The United Way State of Caring Index is a survey-based gauge on nation's and individual state's quality of life. The index, which began in 1992, includes 36 long-term indicators in such fields as financial security, health, education, safety, charitable giving, volunteerism, civic engagement, and the natural environment. The area of the Index that addresses this particular sphere of interest is Volunteerism/Charity/Civic engagement.

Civic engagement was addressed in the previous section, so this section will concentrate on volunteerism and financial support of charities.

The methodology used for tracking volunteerism has recently changed and there is not enough data to develop a trend for this community service. Volunteering activities, not included in the Index, show a downward trend in community involvement over the last four to five years. Based on an annual national survey conducted by United Way of America, sixty percent (60%) of Americans were active participants in community life in 1999. The percentage of Americans participating in community activities in 2003 dropped to forty-seven percent (47%).

Another indicator of community involvement is the amount of per capita donations to non-profit organizations. This indicator of citizens' engagement in community activities has increased at a steady rate nationally over the 1995 to 2002 time frame. South Carolina's per capita giving, during this same time period has been somewhat erratic. This indicator tracks charitable giving to mostly local organizations, but due to the data collection method does not include donations to churches.

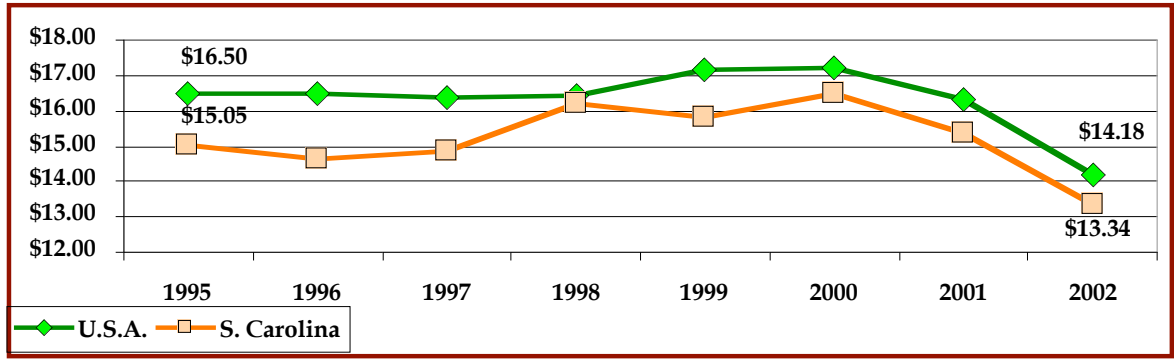
Per Capita Financial Support to Non-Profit/Charitable Groups (1995 – 2002)



Source: National Center on Charitable Statistics & U.S. Census Bureau

An indicator that identifies citizens' involvement with local civic action is the per capita annual giving to the United Way. The United Way is designed as a single donation point to raise financial support for local charitable organizations. Both nationally and statewide, the per capita donations to United Way dropped to an eight-year low in 2002. Much of this decrease can be attributable to the national outpouring of giving to the victims of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack. If this model holds true, the donations to the victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 may affect the level of future giving to United Way.

Amount Raised by United Way Per Capita (1995 – 2002)



Source: United Way of America, Research Services (2002)

These indicators show a commonality between the citizens of South Carolina and the nation as a whole, when participating in community activities. Despite the recent downturn in donations to United Way, the overall increase in charitable giving on a per capita bases attests to the civic involvement of the citizens of South Carolina.

PROMOTE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS AND SATELLITE SHOPPING SITES AREA-WIDE

Long-term indicators selected to identify the on-going revitalization and development of commercial business centers in all three counties:

1. Commercial building permit trends throughout the area;
2. Efforts underway to revitalize the downtowns in each of the counties.

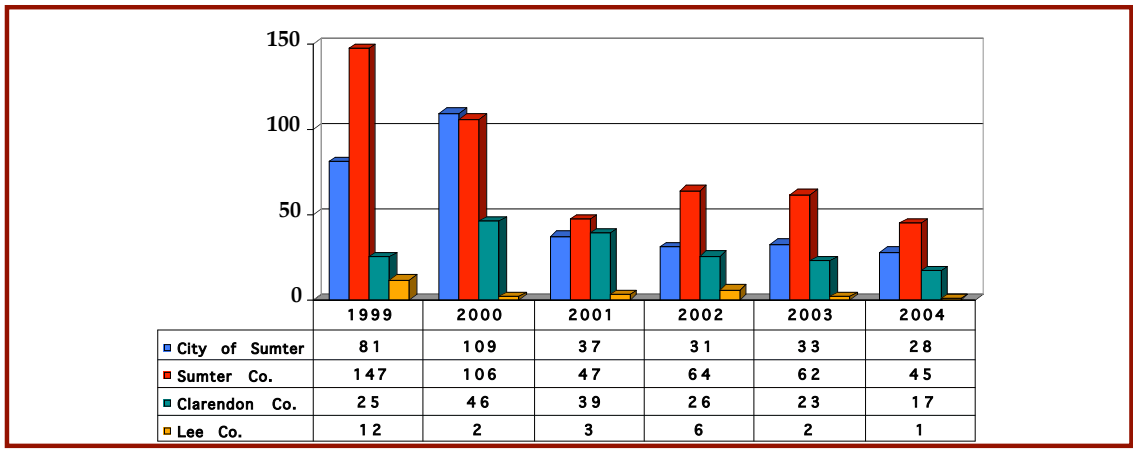
Commercial Building Permit Trends

The growth of business centers is an essential element in the economic development of any community. The three-county area has seen a significant expansion in commercial development over the last five years. Lee and Clarendon Counties have experienced increased commercial activity, particularly at the Interstate interchanges that transverse these counties. Sumter has seen significant commercial growth ever since the County was designated a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) in the early 1990s. When a city/county is designated an MSA, chain retailers and restaurants become much more interested in establishing their business in the area. The major commercial growth in Sumter has taken place on the western and southern sides of the City. Much of this

growth was spurred by a continuing burst of residential development in this part of the County and the fact that Shaw AFB is located west of the City. Now that Shaw AFB is scheduled to expand its mission and receive a large number of additional personnel, even more merchandise chain stores are expected to locate in the City and County of Sumter.

A means of measuring the commercial growth of an area is to track the number of non-residential building permits issued by local governments. There is a drawback to this measurement system, because a non-residential building permit can be for a single room store or a Wal-mart Super Center. However, by tracking the number of permits it is possible to see a trend in commercial growth in a particular area.

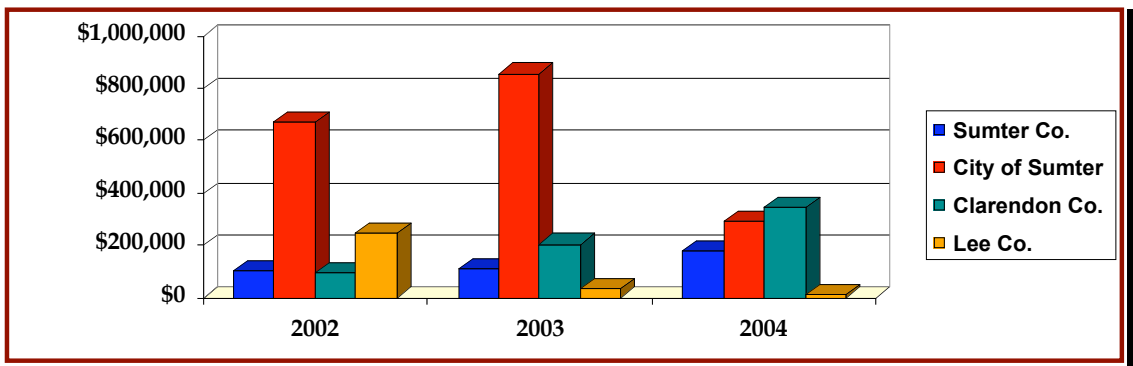
Number of Non-Residential Building Permits by Jurisdiction 1999 - 2004



Source: Santee-Lynches Economic Forecast Database

By determining the average construction cost for non-residential building permits, it is possible to get a measure of the scale of commercial development by jurisdiction.

Average Non-Residential Building Permit Construction Costs 2002 - 2004



Source: Santee-Lynches Economic Forecast Database

The scale of commercial construction in the City of Sumter has led the way area-wide. The establishment of large retail stores and restaurant chains are the main businesses spurring this commercial development in the City. Both Sumter and Clarendon Counties have had steady commercial growth during the last three years.

The area is experiencing a steady expansion of commercial businesses and it is important that this expansion continue. An underlying prerequisite for continued non-residential growth is an expanding population base. While the three counties showed growth between 1990 and 2000, none of the counties' populations grew at the South Carolina average. Unless the Tri-County's population increases at or above the South Carolina average, there is a likelihood that the commercial development may slow appreciably.

The Revitalization of the Counties' Downtowns

The downtown commercial areas of the cities and towns in the rural counties of Clarendon and Lee still play a major role in their residents' shopping habits. The City of Manning, the Clarendon County Seat, continues to meet the basic retail needs of its citizens and those from the surrounding area. Much the same can be said for the City of Bishopville, the County Seat of Lee County. Both of these small cities benefit from their location close to an Interstate interchange. As stated earlier in this document, these two rural counties have experienced commercial growth associated with these interchanges. In Clarendon County there are also two towns, Summerton and Turbeville, which are located near Interstate 95 (I-95) interchanges that provide a small commercial center for residents in and around these towns. All of these municipalities have an historic downtown flavor which adds to their rustic charm. In order to maintain the historic market place viability of these commercial centers, all four of these municipalities have invested in a downtown revitalization project. Through the use of State and Federal grants, all of these localities have either started revitalization programs or are in the planning stage to initiate such a program. Projects in these municipalities include the removal of power poles/ burying power lines, façade renovations which retain their historic architecture, expansion and development of municipal parking, cosmetic renovations of their downtown streets and sidewalks, and in some cases infrastructure upgrades.

The City of Sumter's downtown faces a different set of circumstances than those of the four municipalities in rural Lee and Clarendon Counties. The downtown area of the City of Sumter is located fifteen miles from the nearest Interstate and is also located on the eastern side of the City. Downtown Sumter started to decline over two to three decades ago and several attempts at revitalizing the downtown area have been initiated over the years. During the past twenty years, the City has grown in geographic size, but that growth has been primarily toward the west and south. This growth has led to the establishment of commercial enterprises in those parts of the City which has the greatest population increase. As more large commercial ventures are located in satellite shopping centers, the City's downtown shopping area continued to decline. The major development in Sumter's city center has been an aggressive building campaign by the Tuomey Healthcare System, the regional hospital and its supporting clinics. In addition to this medical development, the downtown area still constitutes the center for the legal profession and government agencies in the Sumter City/County.

The current Sumter Downtown Revitalization Plan began in 1999. This present initiative has used a wide range of grants, tax investment, and private donations to accomplish its goals. The Revitalization Plan has used grants from the South Carolina Department of

Transportation, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) – Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Department of Transportation. Some of the initial funding for the plan was from a federal Empowerment Zone grant received by the City of Sumter. In addition, it has employed Tax Investment Financing (TIF) and local taxes to achieve several upgrades to the downtown area.

The current Sumter plan has incorporated several initiatives to upgrade the City center commercial zone. It has expanded and upgrade-d municipal parking, invested in extensive streetscape renewal, and demolished some of the older buildings. Many of the buildings in the City’s downtown area are historic and are subject to special regulations when they are to be renovated. This places additional costs on façade restoration, which is financed through a combination of grants, low interest loans and the business owner.

Another strategy being used by the City of Sumter to increase pedestrian traffic in the downtown area is a series of street fests, free outdoor entertainment, and holiday celebrations. This strategy has been successful and is forecast to continue for some time.

The investment in the Sumter downtown center has been successful in retaining many of the retail businesses in the area, but has had only very limited success in attracting new retail and restaurants to the City center. Recently, Sumter has established a Growth and Development Office to recruit commercial business to the County/City. Part of the mission of this new agency is the use of tax initiatives, not only for the commercial downtown area, but for commercial development throughout the County and City. These tax incentives are targeted at existing vacant commercial locations scattered throughout the area.

The City of Sumter and the other tri-county cities and towns have embarked on an aggressive and focused revitalization of their downtown centers. The time-frame for these renovation plans range widely based on the size and scope of the plan. The retention of existing downtown businesses combined with an ongoing recruitment of new business to the area is the major focus of all the plans. The various municipalities have all invested significant resources on their downtown strategies and expect a positive return on their investments.

Enhancing Community Health and Recovery Opportunities

Goal: To provide a broad range of medical care and preventative medicine

education that affords the citizens of the area the opportunity to maximize individual, family, and community wellness.

Prioritized issues that can be affected by community actions:

- 1. Focus community education, health awareness, and preventative medicine programs to improve overall community wellness.**
- 2. Improve the quality and quantity of mental health services.**
- 3. Reduce the incidence and circumstances contributing to low birth weight babies.**
- 4. Enhance rural area access to health services.**

FOCUS COMMUNITY EDUCATION, HEALTH AWARENESS, & PREVENTATIVE MEDICINE TO IMPROVE OVERALL COMMUNITY WELLNESS

Long term indicators selected to measure Emergency Room visits for non emergency conditions and other health issues that face communities in the area:

1. Hospitalization for selected diseases.
2. Death rates for selected chronic diseases

Hospitalization for Selected Diseases

During 2003, hospital discharges for residents of the three counties covered by this report totaled 19,389. The cause for the greatest number of hospitalizations in our area was not disease associated, but involved child delivery. The hospital admissions for the combination of vaginal and cesarean deliveries totaled 1,785 or over 9% of all hospitalizations. Another 2% of all hospitalizations were rehabilitation which is provided for a myriad of medical conditions. The largest number of disease-associated hospital admissions/discharges in our area was cardiac related.

TOP DISEASES RESULTING IN HOSPITALIZATION

Disease	Clarendon	Lee	Sumter	Total
Heart Failure	99	103	544	746
Pneumonia/Pleurisy	122	76	236	434
Red Blood Cell Disorder	35	51	268	354
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease	57	-	280	337
Bronchitis/Asthma Age 0-17	73	83	178	334
Chest Pains	86	65	164	315

Source: S.C. State Budget & Control Board, Office of Research & Statistics – 2003

In addition to the above diseases, there were a significant number of other diseases that resulted in over 250 admissions area-wide. Some of these are digestive disorders, renal failure, septicemia, and kidney/urinary tract infections.

The Emergency Room, as a vehicle for medical care, was used extensively in the three-county area. The Census Bureau estimated the population of the area in 2003 at 159,159.

During that year there were 68,862 Emergency Room visits by residents. While not every Emergency Room visit was made by a resident of the three-county area, the vast majority of these visits were by local residents. This equates to a ratio of an Emergency Room visit for each 2.3 persons in the local population. This is only slightly greater than the South Carolina average of an Emergency Room visit for every 2.4 people in the State.

Individual counties had a high rate of Emergency Room visits for certain diseases.

County	Disease	Nr. of ER Visits	Rank in State
Sumter	Blood & Blood Forming Diseases	396	8
Lee	Cancers & Neoplasm	225	6
Clarendon	Diseases of the Respiratory System	8,692	4
Clarendon	Infectious & Parasitic Diseases	2,735	5

Source: S.C. State Budget & Control Board, Office of Research & Statistics – 2003

The relatively high rate of disease and use of Emergency Room for medical care are areas of concern for Lee, Clarendon, and Sumter Counties, and speaks to the need for better implementation of preventative and primary care medicine.

Death Rates for Selected Chronic Diseases

The overall death rate for the total three-county area is slightly higher than the South Carolina average. The two more rural counties have a significantly higher overall death rate which is distributed fairly equally between the races. This higher death rate is partially attributable to the aging of the Counties' population and the larger percentage of individuals living below the poverty level. Many of the rural poor are under-educated and, as a group, are not able to take advantage of many of the preventative medicine programs made available in the area. Sumter County tracks the State averages fairly closely, but the County's lower death rate for blacks and others results in its overall death rate being below the State norm.

Location	White Death Rate per 1,000 of 2001 Estimated Population	Black & Other Death Rate per 1,000 of 2001 Estimated Population	Overall Death Rate per 1,000 of 2001 Estimated Population
S. Carolina	9.2%	8.5%	9.0%
Clarendon	10.2%	10.0%	10.1%
Lee	11.9%	10.2%	10.8%
Sumter	9.2%	8.2%	8.7%

Source: S.C. Dept. of Health & Environmental Control, Biostatistics & Health Division – 2001

With the high overall death rate in Clarendon and Lee Counties, the causes of death in these two rural counties, plus Sumter County, give an insight into some of the medical problems directly affecting our area's population. There were a total of 1,455 deaths in the three-county in 2001, with cardiovascular disease and various forms of cancer identified as the cause of over sixty percent (60%) of the deaths. These two diseases account for a slightly higher percentage of all deaths in this area than the State in general.

	Three County Area		South Carolina	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Cardiovascular Disease	556	38%	13,158	36%
Cancer	352	24%	8,262	23%
Diabetes	47	3%	1,089	3%
Pneumonia	24	2%	752	2%
Lower Respiratory Disease	66	5%	751	2%

Source: S.C. Dept. of Health & Environmental Control, Biostatistics & Health Division – 2001

In addition to the area's higher death rate attributable to cardiovascular disease and cancers, chronic lower respiratory disease accounts for a much greater percent of local deaths than the South Carolina average. While this may be an aberration, the significantly higher death rate resulting from this disease is worthy of greater study. Likewise, the area's cancer deaths, distributed among the various types of the disease, show a much higher death rate from prostate cancer, five percent (5%) of all cancer deaths in the region versus the State norm of two percent (2%) of all cancer deaths.

While the causes of death in the region generally track with the State's, there are some diseases that account for a higher local death rate. These differences may require some additional study by the medical community to identify the causation factors.

IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Long term indicators selected to measure mental health issues that face communities in the area:

1. In-patient/emergency room discharges for mental health disorders.
2. Community mental health service admissions.

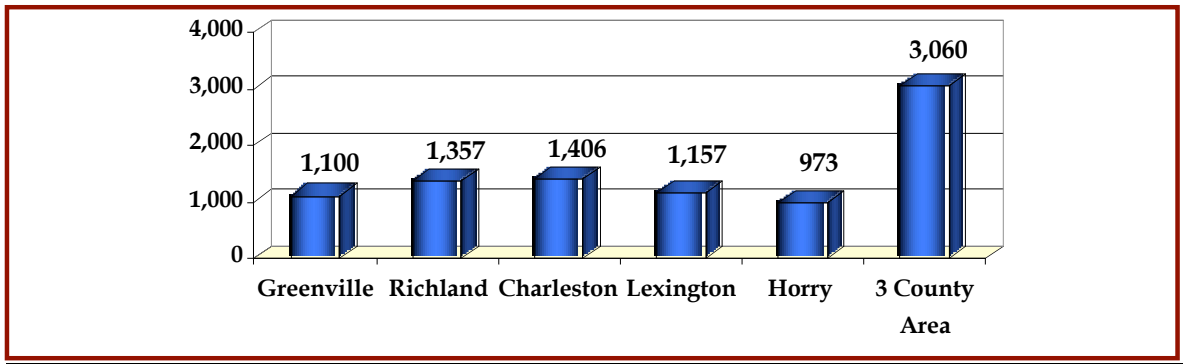
Hospital Discharges for Mental Health Disorders

Inpatient and out-patient diagnosis of mental disorders are some of the most accurate ways of capturing private and public clients with mental health disorders. Emergency Room visits are a very inefficient and costly way to the identification and diagnosis of mental health disorders.

The counties of this area have a high number of mental disorders diagnosed through hospital Emergency Rooms. The diagnosis is done by on-call Mental Health staff that

stabilizes and then determines treatment. Since The Willows”, a former mental health facility in Sumter, closed, many of these patients have to be released after being stabilized. None of our three counties rank in the top fifty percent of South Carolina counties that discharge mental disorders from Emergency Rooms. However, the three counties’ combined total of mental disorder discharges from Emergency Rooms is exceedingly high when compared with counties that have a larger population base. The latest statistics available for mental disorder discharges from Emergency Rooms at the county level is for the year 2003. Therefore, to compare the number of discharges and resident population, this study will use the 2003 estimated population figures issued by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Mental Disorder Inpatient/Emergency Room Discharges - 2003



Source: S.C. Budget & Control Board, Office of Research and Statistics – 2003

2003 Estimated Population	Greenville	Richland	Charleston	Lexington	Horry	3 County Area*
	395,357	332,104	321,014	226,528	210,757	159,109

* The combined population of the three-county area of Sumter, Clarendon, and Lee.

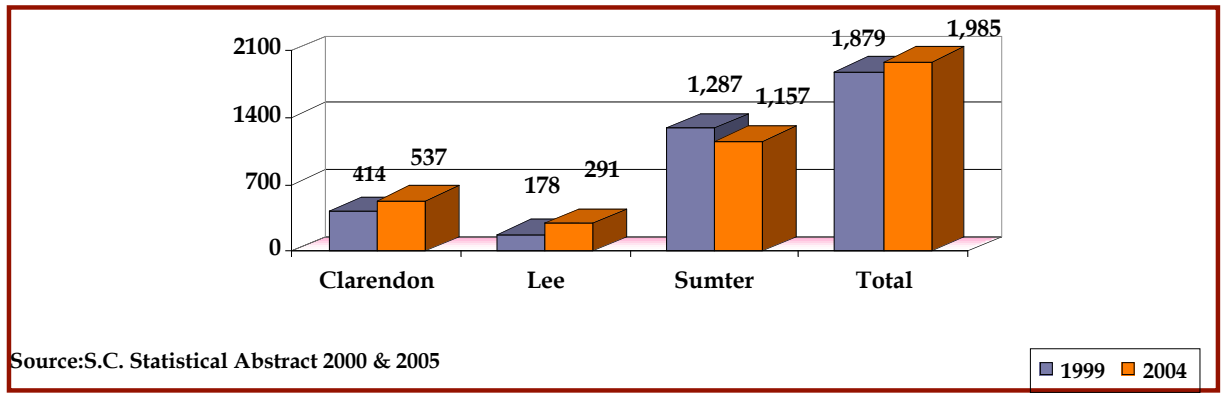
Diagnosis of mental disorders during inpatient/Emergency Room visits is most prevalent in the area’s two more rural counties. Although Sumter County accounts for two-thirds of the area’s population, it only accounts for one-third of the in-hospital diagnosis of mental health problems.

Community Mental Health Services Admissions

As a result of the de-institutionalizing of the mental health system during 1960-1970 and the budget reductions in the State’s Department of Mental Health’s during the first few years of the Twentieth Century, the Community Mental Health system has assumed the major role in treating mental illness in South Carolina. The Community Mental Health system is composed of seventeen (17) clinics, with each clinic responsible for one or more counties in the State.

The Santee-Wateree Community Mental Health Center (CMHC) is responsible for treating the mentally ill in Sumter, Clarendon, Lee, and Kershaw Counties. Working with a staff of mental health specialists and five psychologists the Center has the largest number of active clients per 10,000 population of all South Carolina clinics.

Santee-Wateree CMHC-Comparison of Clients Fiscal Year 1999 and 2004



The number of mental health clients increased in the three-county area during the five-year period between 1999 and 2004. While there was a decrease in the number of clients in Sumter, the two more rural counties saw a sharp increase in mental health admissions. This is primarily due to a dramatic increase in adult (18-64) mental health clients in the area since 1999. Child clients served by the Santee-Wateree Center accounted for 37% of the Santee-Wateree 2004 clients compared with the State of South Carolina where children made up 42% of the client base.

The large number of mental health clients in relation to the area's population totals, combined with some difficulties in transporting patients, the need for additional community residential care facilities specifically targeted to treat those with mental illness, and hospitalizing patients in Columbia, places a burden on the local mental health staff. Since mental health clients have limited options for community based housing, they often reside in residential care facilities that are often ill-equipped to handle the problems associated with the mentally ill. A transportation voucher system or dedicated van service would facilitate the mental health care professionals' ability to manage their treatment time much more efficiently.

REDUCE THE INCIDENCE AND CIRCUMSTANCES CONTRIBUTING TO LOW BIRTH WEIGHT BABIES

Long term indicators selected to measure the high rate of low birth weight babies in the area.

1. Expectant mothers' prenatal care visits.
2. Low weight live births by age and race.

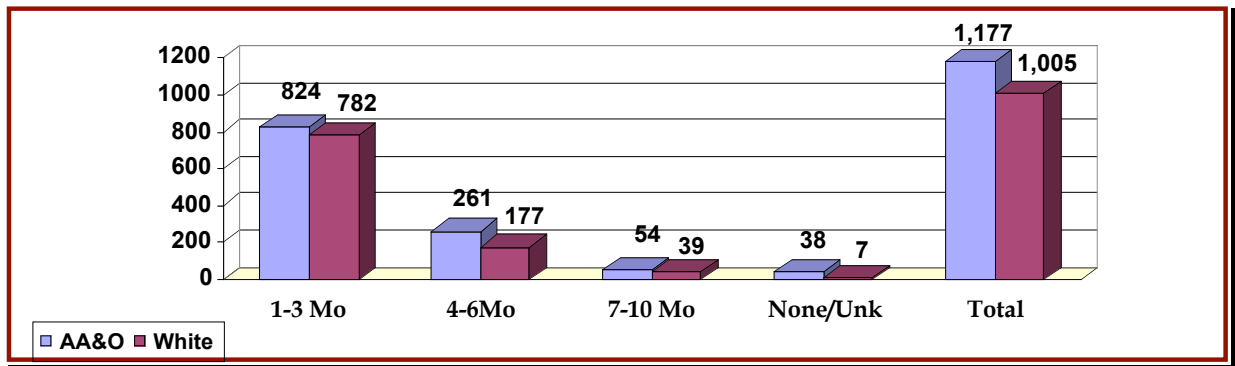
Expectant Mothers Prenatal Care Visits

Based on the 2000 Census, the African-American and Others (AA&O) portion of the population accounts for fifty-three percent (53%) of the three counties' total population. This racial diversity makes this three-county area a minority majority region. This AA&O population majority and the higher birth rate of this portion of our population must be taken into consideration when examining the racial component of expectant mothers' actions.

“From Data to Action” produced by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) documents that white and Hispanic women are more likely to begin prenatal care earlier in their pregnancy than black women. This disparity among the races is “not related to race, per se, but to socioeconomic factors such as income, education level, access to health care, and access to insurance.”

The CDC states that “inadequate use of 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, by seeing a health care provider regularly, pregnant women can have the provider identify and treat problems ASAP. A series of studies has shown that early and regular prenatal care is often vitally important to the health of both the mother and the child. Inadequate use of prenatal care has been associated with increased risks of low-birth-weight births, premature births, neonatal mortality, infant mortality, and maternal mortality.

Live Births by Race and Trimester that Prenatal Care Began



Source: S.C. DHEC: South Carolina Vital and Morbidity Statistics - 2001

While twenty-two percent (22%) of white expectant mothers started their prenatal visits in the second trimester or later, this number rose to thirty percent (30%) for African-American and Others. This means that over twenty-six percent (26%) of all expectant mothers in the three-county area started their prenatal visits late or never had a prenatal visit with a healthcare professional. Regardless of socioeconomic condition, all of the area’s expectant mothers need to get prenatal care in the first two months of their pregnancy.

Low Weight Live Births by Age and Race

As stated above, late prenatal visits can result in many medical problems for both mother and child. A significant contributing factor in the large percentage of delayed prenatal visits in the area is the number of live births to unmarried females. While the stigma previously associated with an unmarried female giving birth to a child has been substantially reduced, there are still women (mostly teenagers) who either refuse to acknowledge their pregnancy or want to keep it secret for an extended period of time. There are other unmarried mothers-to-be, who do not have the financial resources or insurance that they think is necessary to gain the medical help necessary to protect their unborn babies or themselves during the critical times of their pregnancies.

The three-county area has a very high rate of live births to unmarried mothers. Lee and Clarendon Counties ranked 3rd and 5th in South Carolina in births to unwed mothers in 2001. This social phenomenon is much more prevalent among the African-American and Other portion of our counties' population than it is among the White segment of the area's population.

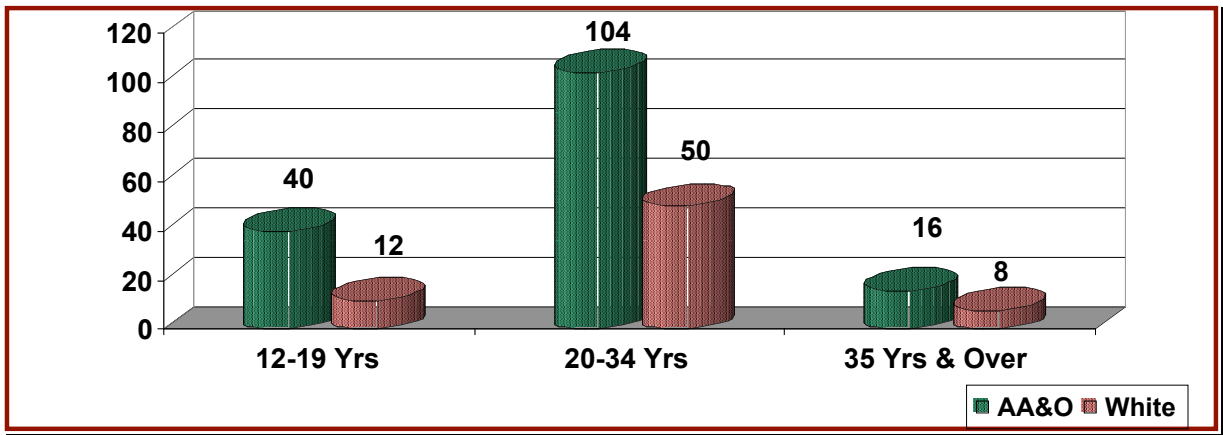
Percent of Annual Live Births to Unmarried Mothers by Race

CLARENDON COUNTY		LEE COUNTY		SUMTER COUNTY	
Black & Other	White	Black & Other	White	Black & Other	White
64.1%	15.5%	60.9%	15.6%	53.7%	14.0%

Source: S.C. DHEC: South Carolina Vital and Morbidity Statistics - 2001

The area's large number of unwed mothers, particularly in the minority population, with the corresponding tendency of these females to fall within the more economically disadvantaged segment of our population, is a major contributing factor in the relatively high low-birth-weight children born to mothers in this area.

Low Weight Live Births by Race & Age of Mother



Source: S.C. Dept. of Health & Environmental Control, Biostatistics & Health Division – 2001

In our area, the rate of low-birth-weight births as a percentage of live births is higher than the State average. While in 2003 the South Carolina low weight births as a percentage of all births was 10.1%, the three-county area's percent of low weight births was 12.5%. The myriad of medical problems associated with low-birth-weight births dictate the need for our communities to take every precaution to limit the number of these at-risk births.

ENHANCE RURAL AREA ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Long term indicators selected to measure the access of the area's rural population to adequate health care:

1. The rural population of the State and the three-county area.
2. Medical care available in rural areas.

The Rural Population of the State and the Three-County Area

As with most States in the Southeast, South Carolina has lost its predominately rural nature. There are still large areas of the State that would be classified as rural, but the greater percentages of the South Carolina population now reside in the urban portions of the State. The 1960 Census showed that 58.8% of South Carolina's population resided in the rural portions of the State. Forty years later, only 39.5% of all South Carolinians resided in the State's rural areas. The three-county area has lost some of its rural nature over the last forty years, but it is still predominately a rural region.

County	1960		2000	
	Population	Percent Rural	Population	Percent Rural
Clarendon	29,494	86.7%	32,502	85.5%
Lee	21,832	83.6%	20,119	81.3%
Sumter	74,941	59.8%	104,646	37.9%
3 County Area	126,267	70.2%	157,267	53.3%

Source: South Carolina Statistical Abstract -2005, S.C. Budget and Control Board

Sumter County has seen a rather dramatic shift in population from rural to urban since 1960. Both Lee and Clarendon Counties have remained very rural over this forty-year period. While the change in Sumter's population has significantly lowered the area's percent of rural population, the three-county area, unlike the State in general, remains primarily rural.

This area has two hospitals, Tuomey Regional Medical Center and Clarendon Memorial Hospital. Both of these facilities are located in the largest cities of Sumter and Clarendon Counties. Three Counties (Richland, Florence, and Lexington) surrounding our area contain some of the finest hospitals in the State and are accessible by helicopter as well as four-lane and Interstate highways. Despite this medical infrastructure, the area's large rural component hampers the community's ability to provide comprehensive medical care to all its citizens. A much larger percentage of the inhabitants of the rural areas are minorities and do not practice preventative medicine due to lack of awareness, transportation, or financial resources.

Medical Care Available in Rural Areas

The basis for this portion of the report is the "South Carolina Rural Health Report" published by the Office of Research & Statistics of the S.C. State Budget and Control Board. The sources for this report were death certificates from 1998 and 1999 inpatient hospitalizations.

Both Lee and Clarendon Counties are categorized as Very Rural Counties (Counties where the largest town is less than 10,000). Medical problems, many of them chronic diseases, are more prevalent in very rural counties than in the State's urban counties. These medical problems range from Maternal/Infant Health, Health Conditions, and Preventative Hospitalization.

The birth rate in rural South Carolina ranges from 33 to 51 per 1,000 females age 15 to 44. Everyday in rural South Carolina five babies are born weighing less than 5 pounds, four women are not receiving adequate prenatal care, and nine babies are born to teenage mothers.

Preventative hospitalization refers to hospitalizations for conditions that should be treated on an outpatient basis. These hospitalizations may indicate an inability of certain individuals to access preventative and outpatient care. Access to health care is an important public policy goal that strives to ensure that all residents receive efficient and effective health care. Preventative hospitalizations are one measure of access to health care. Another preventative measure is economically disadvantaged rural individuals having access to “free clinics”. This is particularly important for many of the Low to Moderate Income (LMI) families in the rural areas that are uninsured or underinsured.

Percent Rural vs. Urban Residents by Age

Rural Resident Age Group	Percent More Likely to be Hospitalized for Preventable Hospitalization than Urban Residents
Children Aged 0-5	39%
Children Aged 13-18	19%
Adults Aged 19-44	34%
Adults Aged 45-64	16%
Overall Rural residents	26%

Source: South Carolina Rural Health Report, S.C. State Budget & Control Board

Health conditions and deaths are indicators of equitable health care. The following deaths and hospitalization in rural areas may indicate inadequate access to care in these rural counties.

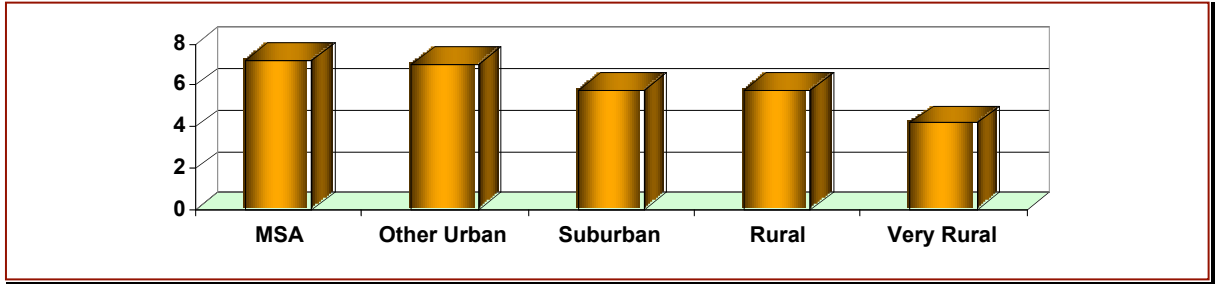
Prostate Cancer: Four people each week die from prostate cancer in rural South Carolina. Not only are people in the very rural counties of South Carolina almost 50% more likely to die of prostate cancer than residents of urban counties, but African-American males in rural counties of the State are nearly twice as likely to die from prostate cancer than rural white men.

Diabetes: This disease and its complications make functional independence difficult or impossible as it significantly increases the risk for heart attack, stroke, lower limb amputation, blindness, and nerve damage. Rural residents aged 19-44 are 23% and those aged 45-64 are 32% more likely to be hospitalized for diabetes than urban residents. African-Americans who are residents of very rural counties (Lee & Clarendon) are 70% more likely to die from diabetes than very rural whites.

Cardiovascular Disease: Thirty-eight percent of all deaths in the three-county area are from cardiovascular disease. The death rate of rural residents from heart problems is thirty-seven percent (37%) higher than their urban counterparts. The very rural population is forty-four percent (44%) more likely to die from a heart attack, fifty-two percent (52%) more likely to die from congestive heart failure, and thirty-seven percent (37%) more likely to die from a stroke than residents of the urban counties.

The number of healthcare providers in the rural areas of South Carolina is also lower than in any other segment of the State's population. The Primary Care healthcare providers are one of the medical disciplines that have a low doctor/patient ratio in very rural counties. Primary care includes family practice, internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics, and gynecology.

Primary Care Physicians per 10,000 Residents by Type of County – 2000



Source: South Carolina Rural Health Report, S.C. State Budget & Control Board

In addition to the dearth of primary care physicians, there are 9 times as many Physician Assistants and 6 times as many Nurse Practitioners in urban counties in South Carolina than in the very rural counties.