



TEN
at the top

Ten Counties. One Upstate. Stronger Together.

2015 MID-YEAR REPORT

TEN AT THE TOP 2015 MID-YEAR REPORT

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The first six months of 2015 have been the busiest since Ten at the Top began regular operations in 2010. We believe they have also been the most impactful in terms of building connections and regional initiatives, networks and actions that are growing partnerships and capacity around key issues that impact economic vitality and quality of life in the Upstate.

The 2015 Mid-Year Report provides snapshots of some of the efforts that have been spearheaded by Ten at the Top volunteers and staff and are building the collective capacity and connections across the Upstate region. This continued moving of the needle would not be possible without the dedicated efforts of more than 500 regional stakeholders who are currently participating in Ten at the Top committees, task forces or on the board of directors. The funding support of more than 70 businesses, organizations and individuals from across the region is also vital. We thank all of you for playing a key role in continuing to enhance collaboration, coordination and cooperation across the Upstate region.

Maintaining the momentum over the remainder of 2015 and into 2016 will be crucial as we continue efforts to ensure the Upstate is universally recognized as a leading place to live, learn, do business and raise a family.

Sincerely,



*Carol Burdette
TATT Chairperson*



*Dean Hybl
TATT Executive Director*



CONNECTING THE UPSTATE

Developing the Upstate Child Well-Being Network

Over the last six months, members of the TATT Human Potential Task Force and professionals from a number of organizations that support child well-being across the region have come together to discuss how to work collectively to create optimal opportunities for all Upstate children to succeed. They are currently working to develop the Upstate Child Well-Being Network to help connect service providers, volunteers and elected officials in ways that will increase communications and connections across the region. The network will also build awareness, discussion and collaboration on how to address challenges and gaps.

“Creating a better world around Child Welfare and Child Wellbeing requires a lot teamwork, partnerships, and collaboration: It is the responsibility of all us no matter what your role is in Human Services, to address the needs of our community. Ten at the Top is fostering true collaboration of individuals, nonprofits and agencies, which will be able to work together to build a better world and create healthy families. This means everyone must embrace the benefits of cooperating with one another in order to deliver what is in the best interest of the children and families that we serve.”

Keith Frazier, Greenville County Director, Department of Social Services

Hosting the First Upstate Funders & Capital Providers Networking Event

Recognizing that access to alternative (or non-traditional) funding sources is often crucial to entrepreneurs and small businesses, the TATT Economic & Entrepreneurial Vitality Task Force began identifying those funding sources across the Upstate. In May, TATT hosted the first Upstate Funders & Capital Providers Networking Breakfast with more than 30 stakeholders participating. The ultimate goal is to create regular opportunities to build relationships and grow the access to capital across the region.



“What Ten at the Top is doing to bring all the resources together to better understand the local entrepreneurial ecosystem is critical.”

Jason Premo, Founder, Premo Ventures



Convening the First-Ever Upstate Superintendents & School Boards Meeting

There are 23 school districts within the 10-county Upstate Region. On February 12th superintendents and school board members from 20 of the 23 districts gathered at USC Upstate to share best practices and work on developing a collaborative message to share with other elected officials. The nearly 100 participants identified several key messages as well as ways to continue growing awareness of the efforts being done to enhance the public education opportunities for students across the region. The intent is to meet at least once annually to continue sharing ideas and building partnerships.



Coordinating Regular Upstate Professional Planners Meetings

All Upstate counties are served by one or more planning agency, either through their municipalities, counties or Councils of Government. In addition, there are many planners working as consultants or for builders, engineering firms and other private companies across the region. Since 2012, Ten at the Top has coordinated regular meetings of the Upstate Professional Planners Group to build relationships and discuss issues of mutual interest. The group recently completed a partnership with the Urban and Regional Planning Graduate Program at Clemson University to conduct an Upstate Comprehensive Plan Review. The Planners Group is now holding meetings to look at specific future growth “hot spots” identified in the analysis and how impacted communities can work collaboratively to ensure future growth is strategic and maximizes local resources.



Conducting Regional Bus Trips: Greenwood and Union

Recognizing that one important aspect of “thinking and acting regionally” is knowing more about the assets and challenges of our regional neighbors, in 2015 TATT began a quarterly Upstate Getting to Know Your Neighbors Bus Tour. During each tour, interested leaders from across the region spend the day visiting an Upstate county to learn about their greatest assets and discussing with their local leaders what opportunities and challenges exist within their communities. The first two bus tours to Greenwood and Union have been extremely successful with more than 50 total participants gaining first-hand knowledge about these diverse parts of the Upstate. Additional bus tours in 2015 are scheduled for Laurens and Oconee.



Growing the Upstate Information Hub

Started in 2012 through a grant from the Graham Foundation, the Upstate Information Hub is a regional portal designed to serve as an online repository of events and resources available in the 10-county Upstate region. The Hub includes one of the most comprehensive events calendars in the Upstate with 300-400 events on the at one time and links to more than 1,200 regional resources. The site has seen steady user growth with the monthly usage increasing from 6,600 unique visitors and 10,000 page views in 2012 to more than 18,000 unique visitors and 28,000 page views in 2015.

OurUpstateSC.info
Upstate South Carolina's Information Hub

TRANSLATE OUR WEBSITE

CALENDAR RESOURCES UPSTATE VISION DRIVERS ABOUT

Find Out What's Happening Across the Upstate
Family activities, cultural programs, special events and festivals are held in many communities across the Upstate. Check out the latest things to do in the Upstate Events and Activities Calendar.

Subscribe
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Weekly Upstate Feature
THE WEEKLY LEDGER

I'm Searching For
Select One

Browse by County
Looking for specific information in one of the 16 Upstate Counties? Browse for quick links to information within each county.

June 2015
Calendar grid showing dates from 1 to 30.

Upcoming Events
Submit an Event

www.OurUpstateSC.info



Promoting “Regional Thinking”

Since 2010, Ten at the Top has conducted 475 regional engagements involving over 25,000 participants from across the Upstate. Through the first half of 2015, TATT has hosted 57 regional engagements with 2,004 total participants. Included in this total is 32 task force or committee meetings specifically focused on growing regional networks, partnerships and initiatives to enhance economic vitality and quality of life across the Upstate region.



2004
PARTICIPANTS IN 2015



25,081
PARTICIPANTS SINCE 2010

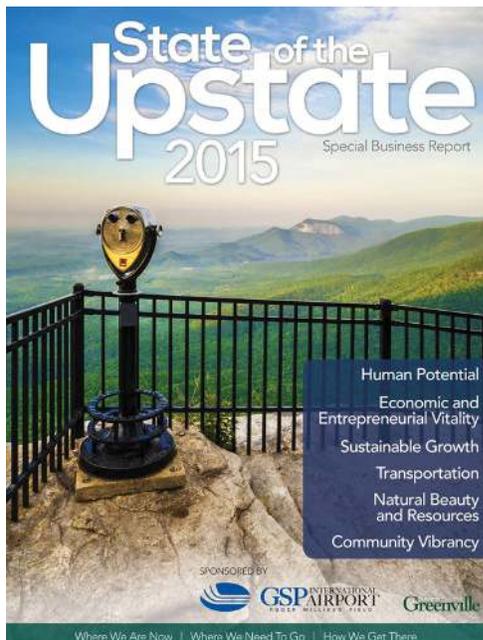


57
ENGAGEMENTS IN 2015



475
ENGAGEMENTS SINCE 2010

Partnering With Greenville Business Magazine for Regional Report



One of the clear messages learned during the Upstate Regional Summit in the Fall of 2014 was that many within the Upstate are unaware of the efforts being done by other businesses, organizations and communities within the region to make this a leading place to live, learn, do business and raise a family. Following the Summit, TATT partnered with Greenville Business Magazine to publish the State of the Upstate regional report. The magazine includes stories from across the region on what communities, organizations and businesses are doing individually and collectively to help the Upstate reach its full potential.

Creating a Regional “Social Media Network”

TATT is currently working with other organizations from across the Upstate to create a network where organizations can regularly share material through social media to promote events, initiatives and other activities happening across the Upstate. The idea of this “spider web” approach is for each organization to re-post and share information with their contacts about what other entities are doing. This should increase regional connectivity and grow awareness of all the great things being done across the Upstate region. The network is open to any organization interested in building awareness of their activities and sharing those of other entities from across the Upstate.



BUILDING REGIONAL CAPACITY

Upstate Food System Strategy

Over the last year, stakeholders representing all elements of developing and building a regional food system have been meeting to identify and address short and long-term opportunities for increasing regional capacity. The result has been the creation of work groups focused on the three key areas of enhancing production, processing and market. Each group is currently working on short-term projects that should provide tangible increases in efficiency and capacity while maximizing resources.

Community Vibrancy “How To Guides”

Building on the “Great Ideas for Community Vibrancy” project that culminated with a series of Community Vibrancy Workshops in 2013, the TATT Community Vibrancy Task Force began work in 2014 on developing regional “How To Guides.” The guides outline step-by-step processes for identifying and implementing different types of initiatives that enhance community vibrancy. The task force has developed guides focused on festivals & events, way-finding signage, public art, marketing and creating local action committees. In the Spring of 2015, Urban Planning & Policy students from USC Upstate identified best practice examples of successful efforts from across the Upstate region within these five areas to be included in the guides.

“Ten at the Top empowers young residents to play an important role in enhancing the vibrancy and sense of place offered in communities across the Upstate. These efforts benefit current communities while providing important experience for our future leaders.”

Dr. Abe Goldberg, Professor of Political Science, USC Upstate

“The “how to” guides created by the Ten at the Top Community Vibrancy Task Force will not only act as a template, but also as an encouragement to those who may be embarking on a community vibrancy project. This in and of itself will stimulate and motivate individuals and groups to move forward with their project and increase the vibrancy and vitality of their community and the Upstate.”

Torance Inman, Executive Director, Union County Chamber of Commerce

Regional WorkKeys Consistent Messaging Project

Building on the statewide push for creating Work Ready Communities, the four Workforce Investment Boards with jurisdiction within the Upstate region now have the common goal of creating a Work Ready Upstate Region. Their initial focus is on creating a common messaging program for the WorkKeys Assessment that is a core component of the Work Ready Program. In collaboration with economic development, education and business representatives, the group is creating a series of presentations that will highlight the importance and opportunities associated with the WorkKeys assessment for businesses, communities, parents, students, educators displaced workers and economic development stakeholders.



CULTIVATING DISCUSSION



Upstate Regional Forums

Since 2012, Ten at the Top has hosted quarterly forums focused on key issues impacting current and future growth across the Upstate Region. The first forum of 2015 focused on Transportation and Infrastructure and included a keynote presentation by former Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell. The second forum looked at Innovation & the Changing Landscape of Healthcare in the Upstate. It featured a keynote presentation by South Carolina Hospital Association President Thornton Kirby and also included dynamic panel discussions on Changes in Healthcare Process and Innovations in Medical Sciences.



Shaping Our Future Series

In 2015 TATT is partnering with Upstate Forever, the Upstate SC Alliance, the Riley Institute at Furman University and other regional partners to host a series of forums focused specifically on various elements of how the Upstate region is growing. More than 120 interested stakeholders heard Asheville area developer Joe Minicozzi discuss the “Dollars and Sense of Development Patterns.” Future programs later in 2015 will focus on “Growing Economic Vibrancy in Downtowns and Rural Communities” with Urban Land Institute Fellow Ed McMahon as the featured speaker and “The Economic Benefits of Conservation & Open Space” featuring Jessica Sargent from the Trust for Public Land.



Upstate Elected Officials Meetings

Since 2010, Ten at the Top has partnered with other regional organizations to host regular Upstate Elected Officials Meetings that include discussions among elected and business leaders from across the region on key issues impacting the Upstate. So far in 2015, the group has met twice. During the first session, representatives from the state legislature and Department of Transportation discussed various transportation funding proposals that were being considered by the legislature. The second session featured representatives from school districts across the region providing an overview of the opportunities and challenges facing public education across the region.



PLANTING THE SEEDS

Entrepreneurial Friendly Tool Kit

Recognizing the importance of local communities understanding and growing their resources for entrepreneurs and small businesses, the TATT Economic & Entrepreneurial Vitality Task Force spent more than a year building the framework for an Entrepreneurial Friendly Community designation program. This project was eventually handed off to the Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG), which secured funding to develop an online Entrepreneurial Friendly Tool Kit to help communities assess and grow their local assets for supporting entrepreneurs. The project included pilot programs in Oconee County, the City of Pickens and the City of Simpsonville. The online toolkit was scheduled for release on July 1, 2015 and will provide all communities within the Upstate a framework for understanding and growing their support for small businesses and entrepreneurs.



Greenville CAN

In June 2013, Ten at the Top and the Barbara Stone Foundation hosted an initial meeting of organizations that support individuals with disabilities and special needs in the Greater Greenville area. This initial meeting led to a year-long community assessment that was funded by the Barbara Stone Foundation. The ultimate result of the analysis was the creation of Greenville CAN (Collaborative Action Network), which is focused on building a stronger community for individuals with disabilities and special needs in the Greater Greenville area. As a result of this collaborative effort, all municipalities in Greenville County have identified their own ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Coordinator (something that has been required under federal law for 25 years) and organizations that previously had little collaborative exchange are meeting regularly to discuss ways to work together to build a stronger overall community.



I-85 Congestion Reduction Project

Through efforts of Ten at the Top and other local organizations in 2012, the elected boards of the Greenville Pickens Area Transportation Study (GPATS) and the Spartanburg Area Transportation Study (SPATS) approved a memorandum of understanding that also included the Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG). This partnership allowed the staffs to formally partner on projects, grants and planning opportunities. Currently, the organizations are working collaboratively to identify how to utilize funds available through the SCDOT corridor plan to reduce congestion along I-85.

Elevate Upstate Grants

Building on the work done to develop the “great ideas” list of community vibrancy initiatives, Upstate developer Phil Hughes worked through Ten at the Top to develop the Hughes Investments Elevate Upstate Community Vibrancy Grants Program to provide local communities with seed funding to develop local vibrancy initiatives. During the first two years of the program, there have been a total of 53 grant applications with Hughes providing a total of \$28,000 in funding. The first three grants of \$5,000 each were awarded in 2013 for initiatives in the City of Greer, City of Seneca and City of Anderson. The 2014 Elevate Upstate Grants were given to the City of Laurens and the City of Travelers Rest. In addition, Hughes provided the other three finalists, the City of Clinton, City of Pickens and City of Gaffney with \$1,000 each to enhance their vibrancy initiatives. Applications for the 2015 grants are due September 15th.

“Let’s Keep TR Beautiful dreamed of a ‘Before I Die’ wall in Travelers Rest for two years. When we saw the TATT Vibrancy Grant that specifically mentioned these walls as an example, we cheered! We knew if Ten at the Top saw purpose for an interactive public art display, we were on the right track. Through the Hughes Investments Elevate Upstate Grant, we were able to expand the original concept with multiple custom walls for three public schools and two community locations in TR. Thanks to TATT & Hughes Investments we were able to reach more people and make the most impact on our community. LKTRB hopes these walls will spark other community projects and encourage individuals to pursue their dreams for the future.”

Brandy Amidon, Let’s Keep Travelers Rest Beautiful



Clean Air Upstate

Looking to increase awareness of the importance of reducing air polluting emissions, the Upstate Air Quality Advisory Committee, which is coordinated by TATT, developed the Clean Air Upstate campaign. It included a public awareness campaign that was led by Duke Energy, WSPA-TV, GSA Business and Bon Secours St. Francis Health System as well as on-the-ground initiatives to reduce emissions. As part of the campaign, the number of schools in the Upstate participating in the Breathe Better (B2) no-idling program has nearly tripled from 14 schools in 2012 to 36 in 2015. Thanks to the efforts of many across the region, the ozone monitors in the Upstate have all seen significant reductions in emission levels over the last three years and have been able to stay within attainment levels even as EPA has announced more stringent emissions standards.



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