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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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This article is the third of an Index-Journal series in which Jeff Fowler, CEO, speaks to the public about economic development in general, and explains the plans and programs of the Partnership for Greater Greenwood County & Economic Alliance.

Proactive Industrial Recruiting for Greenwood County Expansion

In previous articles discussing the Partnership's comprehensive economic development plan, we have addressed how our marketing plans will extend the traditional role of industrial recruiting. In this article, we explain how the strategies for Industrial Recruiting and Project Management have been implemented in the past and may change for future growth. With this discussion, we demonstrate how our marketing plans call for using our historical perspective to develop a more proactive approach for Greenwood County.

In the mid 80's and early 90's, South Carolina led the market in offering attractive financial incentives for new and existing industry. As a result, the "traditional" approach to industrial recruiting efforts was primarily a reactive effort – in other words, we did not have to go out of our boundaries to bring in prospects for development. The leads and calls would come to us! As happens in any competitive economy, other states watched with interest, followed our lead and became more aggressive in their marketing and incentive efforts. As a result SC and Greenwood County lost ground in attracting expanding and emerging industries in the late 1990's.

The Comprehensive Plan for the Greenwood County Partnership Alliance recognizes the need to move from the more traditional approach to a proactive recruiting and marketing strategy. This means we plan to aggressively seek out our potential markets. Before the economic downturn in 1999 and 2000, the reactive approach was more acceptable. Now we can no longer "wait" for industry come to us; we must aggressively promote the benefits of locating in Greenwood County and the state of South Carolina. These strategies are implemented in a variety of marketing approaches and are highlighted in our Comprehensive Plan. We have outlined plans for initiating new direct mail campaigns, creating progressive ad campaigns, providing trade show visibility, and attending select out-of-state marketing trips where we target the most likely candidates for our recruiting efforts.

With this proactive effort, the Partnership will capitalize on relationships with the SC Department of Commerce and the regional. Greenwood County is a member of The Upstate Alliance, located in Greenville. This marketing arm is one of South Carolina's regional economic development organizations formed after the state budgets could not support an aggressive economic development campaign. Each member community within a regional alliance is represented so as to capitalize on specific assets of a region in the state. For example, the Upstate Alliance focuses on suppliers and related industries supporting the automotive industry with BMW being located in Spartanburg. The other SC alliances are the Midlands Alliance (Columbia), the Charleston Alliance, and the Pee Dee Alliance. In utilizing the Upstate Alliance resources, the Partnership Alliance has

the capability to supplement our marketing exposure within both regional and state recruiting efforts.

In working with the regional Upstate Alliance, it is important that we avoid duplication efforts initiated by the state. Our new Chief of Staff at the SC Department of Commerce is Mr. Tim Dangerfield. He has played a crucial role in coordinating marketing efforts and revitalizing our state's capability to attract new companies. Under his leadership, the state's recruiting efforts have resulted in approximately 2.75 billion dollars in capital investment with an increase of almost 13,400 jobs in the state – an 11% increase of jobs within a two year period.

In addition to utilizing relationships with the State and regional alliances, the Partnership Alliance plans to call on Greenwood County to play an expanded role in our efforts to be more proactive in industrial recruiting. In the traditional economic development models, the County, the County takes the role of “project manager.” Typically, — after the Industrial Recruiter develops the prospect, County leadership would provide resources for site development, labor availability, and potential financial incentives. The Partnership's Comprehensive Plan calls for encompassing the traditional County's role of Project Management within the targeted marketing efforts of Industrial Recruiting. Our Industrial Recruiting focus will be on refining our targets to appropriate industrial groups with the region and state. We are utilizing Clemson University and staff to develop a proprietary model to identify those segments that are best targeted for Greenwood County. Using this model, we will be “leaving our borders” to find suitable clients for Greenwood County. In essence, we are building a sales team with a one-stop solution for relocation needs. We will utilize all available benefits from state and regional resources to produce the highest level of prospects for the county.

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