



REGION REPORT

“Local Solutions to Regional Problems”

Spring 2005

Volume 2, Issue 2

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Extra, Extra!!!:

Welcome to the Spring 2005 edition of the
CMCOG Region Report.

This issue of **Region Report** focuses on Fairfield County, the second smallest in area of the four counties in the Central Midlands Region (686.5 square miles) and the smallest in population with 23,454 inhabitants in 2000 (38th most populous county in the State). Fairfield County is located in the northeast of the Central Midlands region in the upper Piedmont. First settled in the mid 18th century by Scotch-Irish, German, English and Huguenot settlers, Fairfield County is steeped in history. The settlement of “Winnsborough” was occupied by the British under General Cornwallis during late 1780. In the years after the Revolutionary War, Winnsboro received its town charter and became the seat of justice for the Fairfield District. European settlers brought cotton to Fairfield County and it remained the staple of the local economy until depletion of the soil due to sharecropping and the effect of the boll weevil ravaged the industry in the early 1920s.

As a result of the decline of the cotton industry, Fairfield’s population declined until the 1980s when its economy began a transformation from agriculture to industry. Mining had been a mainstay of the 20th century economy; Winnsboro blue granite is used worldwide in buildings and monuments, and gold was even mined in the mid-1990s near Ridgeway. Today, a number of international and multi-national concerns have operations in Fairfield County.

The US Rubber Company, now Uniroyal-Goodrich, manufactures tires in the old cotton mill in South Winnsboro and a number of companies such as the Ben Arnold/Sunbelt Beverage Company, Isola USA and Lang-Mekra operate out of the Walter B. Brown Industrial Park near I-77. Unemployment, however, continues to be a major problem in Fairfield County running at 9.3%, especially since the closure of the Mack Truck plant in 2002.

While commercial and Industrial activity is centered around Winnsboro and the I-77 corridor, however, the majority of residential growth is occurring in the eastern portion of County around Lake Wateree, as well as in the southeast of the county, in the areas adjoining Blythewood in Richland County.

In Focus:



Fairfield County

Market Area:

Fairfield County is one of two predominantly rural counties in the Central Midlands Region. The majority of the population resides in the southern portion of the county, with the western part of the County occupied by the Sumter National Forest and Lake Monticello. The main population center of Fairfield County is its county seat of Winnsboro (population 3,599). The Town of Ridgeway is the only other municipality in Fairfield County and had a population of 328 in 2000. Other smaller communities in Fairfield County include Jenkinsville, Mitford, Blackstock and Blair, and many homes have also been built on the western shores of Lake Wateree since the damming of the Wateree River in 1920.

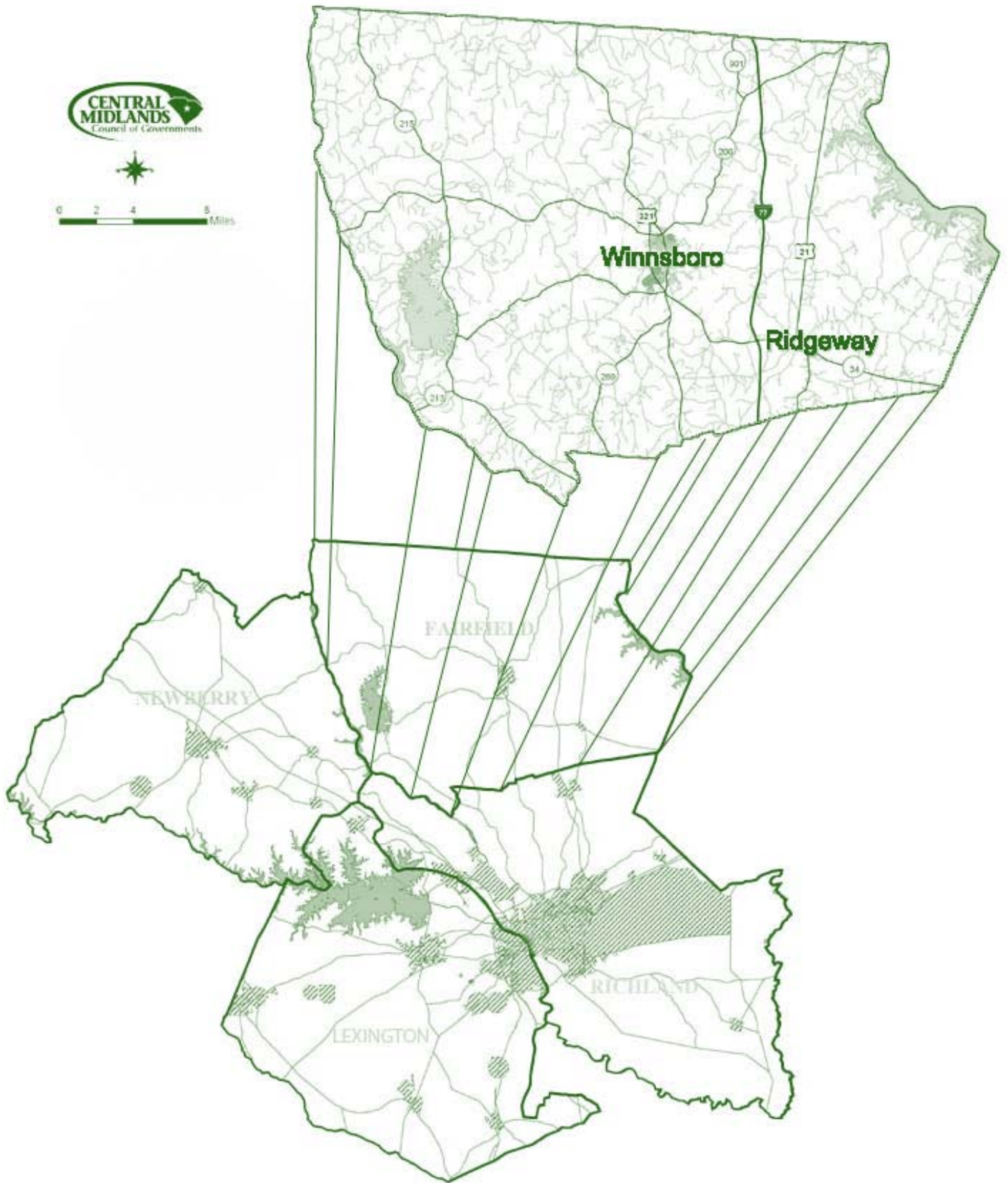
The Economy:

In 1990, the labor force of Fairfield County totalled 10,312. By 2000, the labor force in the County had risen marginally to 10,838; an in-

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www.centralmidlands.org

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Fairfield County Development Climate

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crease of 4.9%. Labor force estimates for Fall 2004 show 11,203 persons; an increase of 3.3% from 2000.

Employment for residents of Fairfield County is divided as follows: Manufacturing - 33.1%; Services - 20.7%; Government - 18.3%; Wholesale/Retail Trade - 13.1%; Construction - 6.1%; Agriculture/ Mining - 4.7%; Transportation - 2.1% and Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate - 1.9%.

Given the rural nature of Fairfield County, it comes as no surprise that more people (4.7%) are employed in agricultural activities than is seen in urban areas of our region (on average 0.6%). Blue collar jobs account for the majority of employment in Fairfield County (60%), in particular in the manufacturing sector. In March 2005, Fairfield County had an unemployment rate of 8.1%, down 1% since early 2004, although despite the recent reduction, it is still higher than the SC average of 6.5%. Despite the harsh economic climate, Fairfield County's local economy appears to be in an upswing. Recently, *Lang Mekra* announced a \$13 million expansion in the County and *Invista*, manufacturer of polyester tire cord products announced it was building a new \$30 million plant in Fairfield County.

One of the problems facing economic development in Fairfield County is the fact that over half of county residents (50.1%) work outside of Fairfield County. 47% of County residents travel more than 30 minutes to work each day. Only 26% had a journey to work that took less than 15 minutes.

Population

The population of Fairfield County has recovered steadily over the last 25 years, having been in decline since the 1940s. Between 1980 and 2000, the population grew steadily from 20,700 to 23,454, a 13.3% increase. By 2005, the population was expected to increase to 24,240 an increase of 3.4% from 2000. It is projected that the county population will grow to 25,000 by 2010, 25,770 by 2015, 26,520 by 2020 and 27,290 by 2025, a growth rate of 116.4% over the 25-year period.

Housing

In 2000, there were a total of 10,383 housing units in Fairfield County, an increase of 1,653 (18.9%) from the 8,730 reported in 1990. A high percentage of units (15.5%) are vacant. 24.4% of area households were comprised one person households. Few households (10.5%) have more than 4 persons. 48.7% of households in Fairfield County were families with children. 24% of households were single parent families. Fairfield County has the highest homeownership rate in the Central Midlands region, with 77.4% of residents owning their homes. The remaining 22.6% are renters. The majority of the housing stock (63.2%) is single family housing. Multi-family housing accounts for just 7.3% of the housing stock with mobile homes accounting for 29.5%.

Fairfield County's Major Employers

Employer	No. of Employees
Fairfield County School District	725
V C Summer Station	665
Plastech Engineered Products	260
Fairfield Memorial Hospital	250
Fairfield County	235
Lang Mekra	220
Salant Corporation	200
Invista	180
Walmart	164

Source: Fairfield County Chamber of Commerce

Demographics & Income

Fairfield County's population has the following racial characteristics: White - 39.6%; African-American - 59.1%; Other - 2.3%. Fairfield County also has the following population age characteristics: under 5 years: 6.7%; 5 - 19 years: 22.1%; 20 - 34 years: 18.5%; 35 - 54 years: 30.0%; 55 - 64 years: 9.4%; 65 - 84 years: 11.7% and 85 years and older: 1.6%. With a median age of 36.9, Fairfield County has the second oldest population of any county in the region. 17.3% of the county's population are aged 60+. Fairfield County has the lowest median household income in the Region. In 2000, it stood at was \$30,433, up 40.8% from \$21,620 in 1990. 2004 estimates show a median household income of \$32,716. The median family income was \$39,572, up 47.5% from \$26,820 in 1990.

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CMCOG Market Areas

The Metro Core area is made up of the following areas: Downtown Columbia, South Richland, East Richland, North Richland, St. Andrews and Cayce / West Columbia areas; the North East area includes Fort Jackson, Richland North East, Blythewood and Cedar Creek areas; the North West sector is made up of the Dutch Fork/ Irmo, St. Andrews & Chapin areas; the Lexington area comprises the immediate vicinity of the Town of Lexington; the Southwest Lexington area includes South East Lexington and West Lexington County areas; the Lower Richland area includes Horrell Hill, Hopkins and Eastover. The other areas comprise Fairfield and Newberry Counties.

Education

The Fairfield County School District serves almost 4,000 K-12 students in seven schools (see table below). The District also has an Adult Education Center, an Early Childhood Development Center, a Learning Center (alternative school) and a Career & Technology Center. Fairfield County is

home to one private school, the Richard Winn Academy serving students in pre-K to 12th grade. There are currently no institutes of higher education located in Fairfield County. Education levels in Fairfield County are as follows: 31.3% of persons aged over 25 who reside in the

County have at least some college education. 11.6% possess at least a bachelor's degree; 3.5% have a masters degree or possess doctorates. 33.0% of Fairfield County residents have not completed a formal high school education.

Fairfield County Schools			
School	No. of Students	School	No. of Students
Fairfield Primary	657	Geiger Elementary	343
Kelly Miller Elementary	247	McCrorry-Liston Elementary	268
Fairfield Intermediate	555	Fairfield Middle	591
Fairfield Central (High)	949		

Transportation

Connectivity in Fairfield County is vital to the movement of people and goods. The County is served by Interstate 77 which links Columbia and Charlotte, NC as well as other major highways such as US 321, US 21, SC 34 and SC 215 serve as major transportation routes through the county. Fairfield County is also well served by rail lines operated by CSX and Norfolk & Southern Railroads. Fairfield County is also served by the Fairfield County

Airport located northwest of Winnsboro. Currently, there is one highway project underway in Fairfield County with the construction of a new interchange at I-77 and Peach Road to create new access points for the Fairfield County Industrial Park. Construction is expected to be complete by the summer of 2006. The following highway improvements have been identified as needed in Fairfield County through the public involvement portion

of the recently adopted Long Range Rural Transportation Plan: congestion due to truck traffic along SC 34 between Newberry and Kershaw counties, as well as the US 321 Bypass. The SC 200 corridor from I-77 south to Winnsboro was also identified as a safety concern due to the current narrow pavement widths. As Fairfield County grows, more transportation issues will arise, particularly around Lake Wateree and the Richland County line as new home construction increases.

Building Permit Activity

Building permit activity in Fairfield County reflects the rural nature of the area. In 2004, 212 building permits were issued, up from 168 in 2003. Half of the County's permits were issued in the Winnsboro area, with another 41% issued in the Ridgeway area with single family home permits accounting for the majority of

permits issued. Property values in Fairfield County vary greatly, however, the average single family home sold for \$53,500 in 2000; over \$35,000 less than in Richland County. Homeownership is however, more affordable in Fairfield County than elsewhere in the Central Midlands Re-

gion. Smaller 2 & 3 bedroom homes can be found for under \$80,000, while lake-front properties can be found for between \$100,000-\$300,000. Older historic homes in Winnsboro and Ridgeway sell for over \$350,000. The primary problem re-

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Distances to Major Markets from Fairfield County

Downtown Columbia
33 miles

Charlotte, NC
69 miles

Charleston, SC
144 miles

Atlanta, GA
237 miles

Raleigh, NC
238 miles

Washington, DC
467 miles

Building Permit Activity (Continued)

(Continued from page 4)

stricting both residential and commercial growth in Fairfield County is the lack of water and sewer in the more rural portions of the region. However, Fairfield County and the Mid-County Water Company are actively seeking to partially address this problem through a grant application to construct a water tower which will serve over 450 homes to the south of Winnsboro and increase water pressure and provide more adequate fire protection..

Historical: Single Family homes account for the majority (58.4%) of the value of permits issued in Fairfield County Between 2000 and 2004, 394 permits were issued for new homes in this area, totaling over \$52.6 million in value. This trend is expected to continue as the population growth continues around Lake Monticello and Lake Wateree as well as in the southeast of the county near the Richland County

line .

Residential: The single family housing market continues to remain constant in Fairfield County with an average of 79 new single-family homes permitted each year over the last 5 years (by far the lowest of the 4 Central Midlands counties). Between 2000 and 2004, 394 single family housing permits were issued at an average cost of around \$133,634. The majority of these homes (64.8%) are located in the major residential growth area of the county, to the south and east of Winnsboro.

Fairfield County has seen no multi-family housing permits issued over the last 5 years. No multi-family housing permits have been issued in Fairfield County since 1996 and Multi-Family Housing accounted for only 7% of the housing stock in Fairfield County in 2000. The Town of Winnsboro is the only place in Fairfield County which has Multi-Family housing units. (See Page 6 for more apart-

ment information).

Non-Residential:

The total value of non-residential permits issued for new construction since 2000 was \$28.8 million, with permits for educational establishments accounting for the majority (31.7%) of non-residential permits (\$9.1 million). The remaining permits were for businesses (\$8.3 mill.), churches (\$6.2mill.), factories (\$7.8 mill.), storage facilities (\$3.7 mill.) and storage facilities (\$1.4 mill.). The most notable non-residential permits to be issued since 2000 were for \$4.8 million to construct a Super Walmart on SC 219 & US 76; \$2.2 million to construct Thomas & Howard's facility in 1999; \$6.5 million to construct the Komatsu plant on SC 219 in Newberry .

In 2004, the largest permit issued in this area was for \$9 million to construct a 75,000 sq.ft training center at the VC Summer Plant on Lake Monticello. Other notable permits issued in 2004 include \$1.2 million for interior renovation work at the MC2 plant and \$708,000 to construct Phase VI at the Lang Mekra Plant both located at the Industrial Park in Ridgeway.

Conclusion

In conclusion, development in Fairfield County, despite its rural characteristics remains quite strong. Commercial development is centered around the industrial park at I-77 and also around the Winnsboro bypass. Residential development will continue to be focused in the southern part of the county as spillover from Richland County continues. The northern and western portions of the county are not expected to experience rapid growth, but the population is expected to increase approximately 16% over the next 20 years to around 28,000 persons.

Data Collection

All building permits issued for the construction of new residential units or the construction of nonresidential structures are included. In addition, building permits issued for additions, alterations or repairs on nonresidential structures are included if the value of the work was listed for \$25,000 or greater. Also included are the additions and repairs to residential structures costing over \$10,000. Central Midlands COG has elected to study the cost of repairs more closely to attempt to determine where regeneration of older housing stock is taking place.

Permits issued for the construction of garages, carports, swimming pools, storage sheds, etc. on residential property are not included in this study.

Fairfield County Building Permits				
Permit Type	2003		2004	
	Number	Average Cost	Number	Average Cost
Additions	27	\$37,915	42	\$42,970
Assembly	4	\$652,526	0	\$0
Business	10	\$130,034	6	\$243,100
Education	1	\$110,000	1	\$8,993,042
Factory	1	\$287,000	4	\$1,007,334
Industrial	1	\$1,472,600	0	\$0
Multi Family	0	\$0	0	\$0
Single Family	71	\$155,486	100	\$141,789
Repair	22	\$26,441	23	\$26,025
Storage	18	\$21,225	19	\$31,122

Source: CMCOG Building Permit Studies, 2003 & 2004

Multi-family Housing Development

Multi-Family housing does not represent a significant portion of the housing market in Fairfield County, accounting for just 7% of the market share. Fairfield County has the fewest multi-family housing units in the Central Midlands region. In 2004, there were 9 multi-family housing complexes containing 550 apartment units in Fairfield County. Of these units, 212 (38.5%) were non-subsidized units (Type A units), and 338 were subsidized/Section 8 units (Type B units). Due to the low total number of multi-family units available in Fairfield County, vacancy rates are low. In 2004 than 4.2% of all apartments in Fairfield County were vacant. The Fairfield County vacancy rate is significantly lower than the Columbia Metropolitan area's total vacancy rate of 8.6% in 2004, but can be attributed to the smaller overall market.

Due to the nature of the market, there have been no new apartment complexes constructed in Fairfield County since 1996. No new Multi-Family units are planned for development. The most recent development was the construction of the 72 unit Winnsboro Apartments in 1996.

Subsidized housing and retirement facilities account for the majority of the multi-family market in Fairfield County. The largest retirement facility in Fairfield County is the Tanglewood Health Care Center in Ridgeway with 150 beds.

Largest Multi-Family Developments In Fairfield County		
Development	# of Units	Address
Castlewood Apartments	96	700 Calhoun St
Lamplighter Apartments	80	197 Lamplighter Dr
Winnsboro Apartments	72	222 US 321 Bypass

Source: CMCOG Multi-Family Survey, 2004

Commercial Development Trends

Commercial development tends to reflect residential growth patterns, and as a result, commercial activity in Fairfield County is, like Newberry County, centered around the county seat of Winnsboro. In 2004, Fairfield County did not have any leasable office space which fits the criteria for our studies, but does have some retail and warehouse space. In 2004, Fairfield County had 5 retail developments totaling 250,204 square feet. This ranks third among the 4 non-metropolitan counties surrounding Columbia (Newberry, Fairfield, Kershaw and Calhoun), behind Kershaw County and Newberry County. Until 1998, the Fairfield retail sector was small. Since 1998, 131,000 sq. ft. of retail space has been added. Rental rates average \$6.93 per square foot; down from the 2000 average of \$8.75 per square foot.

In 2004, vacancy rates in retail properties in Fairfield County were the second highest of the 4 non-metropolitan counties with 46,359 square feet (18.5%) vacant. This represents an improvement since 2000 when the vacancy rate was 22.5%.

In 2004, Fairfield County had 1,190,253 square feet of available warehouse/factory space ranking first out of the 4 non-metropolitan counties and contains 7 of the 23 vacant warehouses/factories surveyed. The largest vacant warehouse/factory space in Fairfield County is the former Mack Truck plant in near Winnsboro, which at 750,000 accounts for 79% of the county's available warehouse/factory space. Attracting a developer to this property would help revitalize the community, Other sizeable warehouse space is available in the Hon building (182,523 sq. ft.) and in the Charm Building in Ridgeway (168,930 sq.ft.). Fairfield County also has 20 industrial land sites available ranging in size from 1 to 2,000 acres.

Fairfield County Commercial Space		
	Ware-house	Retail Space
Square Feet	1,190,253	250,204
Vacancy Rate	98.0%	18.5%
Market Share - Non-Metro	53.3%	20.4%
Av. Rental Rate	\$1.72 sq.ft.	\$6.93 sq.ft.

Selected Statistics for Fairfield County

2000 Census Data

AGE			
	Total	Male	Female
Total Persons	23,454	11,167 (47.6%)	12,287 (52.4%)
Under 5 Yrs	1,580	792	788
5-17 Yrs	4,548	2,228	2,320
18-34 Yrs	4,976	2,407	2,569
35-54 Yrs	7,046	3,383	3,663
55-64 Yrs	2,210	1,073	1,137
65-84 Yrs	2,750	1,183	1,567
85 Yrs & older	344	101	243

RACE			
Fairfield County	White	Black	Other
	9,282	13,859	313
	39.6%	59.1%	1.3%
Winnsboro Town	1,450	2,104	45
	40.3%	58.5%	1.2%
Ridgeway Town	198	123	7
	60.4%	37.5%	2.1%

Occupancy	
	Total
Total Housing Units	10,383
Vacant	1,609
Occupied	8,774
Owner-Occupied	6,794
Renter-Occupied	1,980

2000 Income	
Income	H-holds
Below \$10,000	1,468
\$10,000-\$24,999	2,238
\$25,000-\$49,999	2,564
\$50,000-\$99,999	2,036
\$100,000-\$149,999	298
\$150,000-\$199,999	88
Over \$200,000	65
Average HH Income	\$39,572

Housing Values (Owner-Occupied Units)	
Value	# of Houses
Less than \$19,999	229
\$20,000-\$49,999	901
\$50,000-\$79,999	1,219
\$80,000-\$99,999	614
\$100,000-\$149,999	439
\$150,000-\$199,999	260
\$200,000-\$299,999	195
\$300,000-\$399,999	58
\$400,000-\$499,999	13
\$500,000-\$749,999	0
\$750,000-\$999,999	7
\$1,000,000 +	19
Average Value	\$69,900

Educational Attainment (Ages 25+)	
Level	# of Persons
Less than 9th Grade	1,767 (11.6%)
9th-12th Grade	3,260 (21.4%)
High School Graduate	5,446 (35.7%)
Some College	2,993 (19.6%)
Bachelor's Degree	1,251 (8.2%)
Graduate Degree	527 (3.5%)

Poverty Levels	
Persons Below Poverty Level	4,518
Persons Above Poverty Level	18,516

Source: 2000 Census of Population and Housing

Newsletter Format

The newsletter will focus on each of the areas of the Midlands in turn.

Each newsletter will highlight the latest developments in each area to give a brief overview of each sector of the Central Midlands region. More detailed information can be found on our website.



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Central Midlands Newsletter

EXTRA, EXTRA!!!

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With all the debate recently about the future of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and its ability to be included in the next Federal budget, it is worth considering the impact the program has had on the Central Midlands region over the last 30 years.

Since 1984, communities in the Central Midlands region have received almost \$47 million in CDBG funds to undertake a variety of community and economic development projects ranging from housing rehabilitation efforts to water and

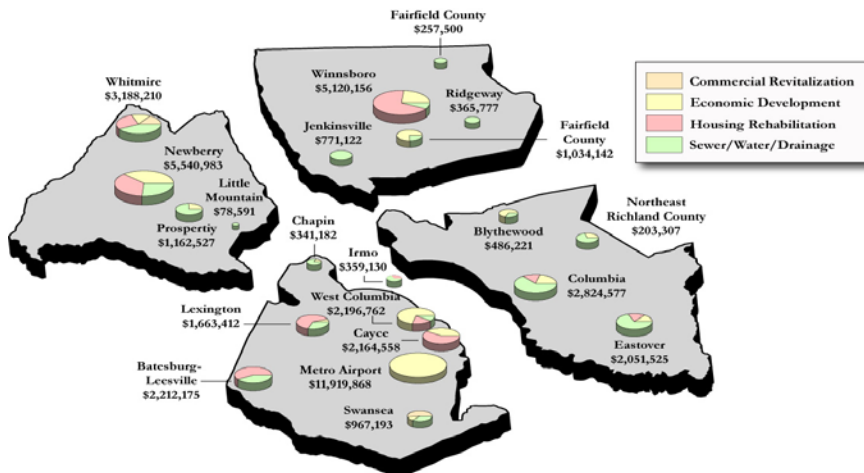
sewer projects for both domestic and economic purposes. But all projects have the same ultimate goal—providing assistance to low and moderate income citizens.

Practically every locality in the Central Midlands region has been the recipient of CDBG funds at one time or another, whether as an entitlement community or through the competitive “Small Cities” program.

Lexington County and its municipalities have received just under half of

all CDBG monies (\$21.9 million), due, primarily to the \$11 million received for projects at the Columbia Metropolitan Airport. Newberry County has received over \$10.3 million; Fairfield County has received over \$8 million, and Richland County has benefited from over \$6.5 million in CDBG funds over the last 30 years.

The \$47 million in assistance through the CDBG Program has improved the quality of life for thousands of low income residents over the last 30 years, and, providing funding is provided in the upcoming fiscal year, will continue to do so for many more of our region’s needy population for many years to come.



The map (left) shows the location and amount of CDBG funds received in the Central Midlands region by type of project since 1984