

A Strategic Tourism Plan for the Salkehatchie Region, South Carolina, October 2008

The purpose of the *Strategic Tourism Plan for the Salkehatchie Region* was to guide tourism marketing and development efforts in the region through a comprehensive examination of existing and potential assets, attractions, markets, and products.

The Salkehatchie Region includes Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Colleton, and Hampton counties. Resident comments and suggestions were collected through a total of five public meetings during the fall of 2007. These meetings were notable in that not only were residents provided a chance to voice opinions, but also given a chance to submit observations and knowledge of the region in writing.

Institute researchers found that the approximate market size of current tourism business in the Salkehatchie Region was an estimated \$28.8 million annually and provides 848 jobs. With marketing, development, and investment, the value of tourism in the region could be as much as \$49 million and providing 1,093 jobs.

Researchers also found that the most viable current tourism segments are those individuals interested in camping, hunting, and history. However, future market development shows that the highest economic impact should accrue from nature-based tourists.

Although it is becoming widely recognized that tourism is economic development for South Carolina, it is not widely recognized that tourism can serve as a catalyst for other forms of economic development, such as retirement, real estate, and health care.

In this context, *A Strategic Tourism Plan for the Salkehatchie Region* is a crucial step toward a more balanced economic development program statewide.