The end of each year always provides an ideal time to reflect on what has been done over the previous 12 months. The end of 2019 provides an even greater opportunity for reflection as it marks the end of a decade. It also serves as the end of the first full decade of Ten at the Top and of my two year tenure as chair of this innovative organization.

The evolution of this organization has been quite remarkable and it was especially satisfying to be able to celebrate that growth and evolution during the recent Celebrating Successes 10th Anniversary event.

It has been a great experience serving as chair of this outstanding organization and I want to thank you for your dedication and commitment. I am pleased to highlight some of 2019’s successes:

- TATT hosted nine county workshops across the Upstate. Each was specifically designed to address an issue identified by partners within that county. Many of the counties have taken the feedback shared during that session and moved forward to advance that issue in their community.

- At the Celebrating Successes event we officially announced the creation of the Upstate Mobility Alliance, which will be an initiative under TATT focused specifically on building collective capacity around transportation & mobility. As the first “big announcement” from this effort, Michelin announced an $825,000 grant that will support public transportation in the Upstate.

- The Upstate Education Spectrum continued to focus on the K-12 teacher shortage. A new campaign called “Teach at the Top” was announced at their November meeting and this effort will begin in 2020 and serve as a region-wide effort to attract and retain teachers in the Upstate.

- The Entrepreneurial Support Providers Network hosted four workshops to help local organizations who support small businesses and entrepreneurs to grow relationships, share best practices and build their collective capacity.

- TATT also hosted four Upstate Senior Needs Workshops focused around key issues impacting our senior population. The group is currently developing a “key issues summary” and will begin to target key influencers to outline critical issues and grow awareness and support.

It was a busy year for TATT as the organization hosted 104 regional engagements with 3,856 participants.

It is through the support and dedication of our current and past board members as well as our funding partners and committee members that TATT has been able to sustain and grow. I hope you share my belief that while the first decade has been great, the best is clearly yet to come.

Best Wishes,

Sue Schneider
Chair of the Board ‘18-’19 CEO, Spartanburg Water
WHY TEN AT THE TOP?

“I got involved with TATT because the Mission and its three primary objectives directly affects my family, friends and working partners long term. As a leader, whether of your business or your family, it is your duty to provide all that TATT is trying to accomplish and to do so takes getting involved. I’m very optimistic about the future for my family, friends and working partners after learning and experiencing TATT’s vision for the Upstate.”

Mark McKinney, General Manager
Cintas Corporation

“Our mission at the South Carolina SBDC is to support business owners and connect them with the resources needed to grow and prosper. Our work with Ten at The Top allows us to collaborate with like-minded individuals and promote a spirit of cooperation in the counties we serve. We are thankful for the partnership and look forward to continued success in years to come.”

Ben Calhoun, Area Manager & Consultant
Greenwood Area SBDC

“Ten at the Top has been instrumental in bringing together different organizations that have the same goal of helping seniors live independently at home and in our communities. Through the meetings, these organizations strategize to better serve the community, avoid duplication of services, and make our limited resources stretch to as many in need as possible. I am thankful for the partnership between Appalachian Council of Governments and Ten at the Top.”

Tim Womack, Aging Services Director
Appalachian Council of Governments

“Greenlink is excited to partner with the Upstate Mobility Alliance to build more support for transit across the entire Upstate region. Greenlink has a Transit Development Plan which outlines improvements to Greenlink’s service over the next five years. Some of the proposed routes included in the Transit Development Plan cross county boundaries – with a recommended route into Easley, Pickens County and another one serving I-85 into Spartanburg County. It’s important that we build relationships with our neighboring jurisdictions and work together if we’re going to be successful in making Greenlink more viable for our customers. We believe the Upstate Mobility Alliance will help us with these goals and initiatives.”

James Keel, Director
Greenlink (City of Greenville)

“The TATT County workshop in Laurens County was a well organized process to help Laurens County develop our path for our 2040 long range strategic vision. The workshop was also conducted at the ideal timing for our upcoming capital sales tax referendum. TATT did an excellent job organizing the event, then following up with a compilation of the data collected by our Community members. The process allowed our Community members to express their visions for our future which will help form the basis for our strategic initiatives.”

Jon Caine, County Administrator
Laurens County SC
CELEBRATING A DECADE OF

2009
Upstate Together and the Urban Land Institute host a regional planning exercise, Upstate Reality Check, that brings together over 400 leaders.

Upstate Together is incorporated as a non-profit and re-named Ten at the Top.

2013
The Clean Air Upstate campaign is launched to address air quality concerns.

The Hughes Investments Elevate Upstate Grant program is established to encourage

2010
The first meeting of Upstate Elected Officials is convened, later becoming a regular event.

2011
With the input of over 10,000 residents, the Our Upstate Vision is unveiled leading to the selection of five focus areas to guide the work of Ten at the Top.
CONNECTING THE UPSTATE

2014
Ten at the Top hosts the first Upstate Regional Summit, “Rechecking Our Reality”, now a biennial event.

2015
Ten at the Top launches the Getting to Know Our Neighbors bus tour series.

2016
Ten at the Top hosts The PIQUE, an annual event to engage young leaders across the Upstate.

2019
The Upstate Mobility Alliance is created to promote the Upstate’s Mobility Vision.
Outreach & Engagements

Programs & Initiatives

- 58 Meetings in 2019 with 920 Participants
- 401 Meetings since 2010 with 7,611 Participants

Regional Surveys

- 1 Conducted in 2019 with 44 Participants
- 38 Conducted since 2010 with 9,176 Participants

Presentations

- 14 Given in 2019 with 780 Attendees
- 208 Given since 2010 with 8,331 Attendees

TATT Meetings

- 11 Meetings with 202 Attendees
- 133 Meetings since 2010 with 2,528 Attendees

Regional Forums

- 20 Events in 2019 with 1,910 Attendees
- 130 Events since 2010 with 14,324 Attendees

910 Events
41,970 Participants

Since 2010
This year’s Celebrating Successes event was quite a celebration—in addition to celebrating milestone anniversaries of companies and organizations across the Upstate and awarding the annual Hughes Investments Elevate Upstate grants, Ten at the Top celebrated its 10th anniversary as a convener and connector in the Upstate.

Just under 500 people, including funding partners, elected officials, and business leaders, gathered at the Greenville Convention Center to celebrate, with Governor Henry McMaster delivering a keynote address.

Dr. Fay Sprouse, Ware Shoals School District Superintendent, was awarded the Burdette Leadership Award, and the Welling Award for Regional Collaboration was given to BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina. “Power of Ten” donors, those funding partners who have given to Ten at the Top every year, were also recognized.

Unlike in past years, the Elevate Upstate grant finalists made their presentations to a group of around 200 people prior to the main event, and Phil Hughes announced the winners at the luncheon: Powdersville Business Council for their Rhythm on the River event, and Main Street Laurens for the Piedmont Blues and Roots Music Festival.
ANNUAL REGIONAL AWARDS

Burdette Leadership Award

Named in honor of the first female chairperson of Ten at the Top, the Burdette Leadership Award is given annually to a female leader who has served and led across the Upstate, demonstrating “service over self” throughout her career.

Dr. Fay Sprouse, Ware Shoals School District Superintendent, was the 2019 recipient of the Burdette Leadership Award.

Welling Award for Regional Collaboration

Named in honor of the first chairperson of Ten at the Top, the Welling Award for Regional Collaboration is given annually to individuals, businesses, or organizations that have a proven record of supporting and encouraging collaboration across jurisdictional and stakeholder boundaries.

BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina was the 2019 recipient of the Welling Award for Regional Collaboration.
ELEVATE UPSTATE GRANT

The Hughes Investments Elevate Upstate grant program was created in 2013 as part of a series of Community Vibrancy Workshops hosted by Ten at the Top. The purpose is to provide initial funding support for community based programs that promote community and economic vibrancy in local areas. The initiative awards two $5,000 grants annually, to organizations with programs designed to increase local vibrancy in communities within the Upstate.

The 2019 recipients of the Hughes Investments Elevate Upstate Grants were The Powdersville Business Council for their Rhythm on the River event and Main Street Laurens for the Piedmont Blues and Roots Music Festival. Phil Hughes, the grant’s namesake, also pledged to give $1,000 each to the other three finalists contingent on completion of their projects.

Rhythm on the River, a community event designed to bring families and businesses together in the Powdersville community, will take place on May 2, 2020, at Dolly Cooper Park with family activities, music, and food trucks.

Piedmont Blues and Roots Music Festival will take place in downtown Laurens on May 9, 2020, celebrating the Piedmont Blues music that has a long history in Laurens.
When Ten at the Top started a decade ago, one of the first things we did was hold workshops in each of the ten Upstate counties, asking local business and residents “what matters most” as we look towards the future of the Upstate. This input led to the formation of the regional vision and five driver areas that have guided our work over the last decade.

To celebrate our tenth anniversary serving the Upstate, we decided to return for another workshop series in each county, but this time the topics were selected by county residents to address or explore a specific issue. The workshops were as different as the counties themselves, but all provided community members the chance to hear from experts outside of the county and then give their own input through a variety of interactive exercises. The information and feedback gathered was provided to each county to help them continue local efforts to address the areas of focus identified by residents.

We hosted workshops in nine counties, and will complete the series with a workshop in Greenville in early 2020.
Three committees were created to study elements of the teacher shortage, and their findings and recommendations were presented to the Education Spectrum at the Spring Forum in May. They then spent the summer developing their recommendations into actionable strategies, which were shared at the Fall Forum in November. The primary outcome of this work is the creation of a regional teaching brand, Teach at the Top, and plans to implement a recruitment platform and messaging campaign in 2020.

Ten at the Top, in partnership with Public Education Partners, has been convening the Upstate Education Spectrum since mid-2017. The spectrum brings together K-12, higher education, business, and community leaders from across the Upstate to develop strategies for collaboration around the K-12 teacher shortage impacting all Upstate districts.

Throughout South Carolina, school districts are finding it increasingly difficult to fill teacher vacancies due to a growing demand for qualified teachers, increased student enrollment, and a decreased pool of qualified applicants. The SC Center for Education, Recruitment, Retention and Advancement’s 2018 Supply and Demand report indicates that districts reported a 13% increase in vacancies compared to the prior year and a 29% increase compared to 2016. Districts are also struggling to retain their teachers, with a reported 25% of first-year teachers hired in 2017 no longer teaching in any SC public school.
Our signature event brought nearly 300 young professionals from across the Upstate to the Greenville ONE Center in March. These young people may be fresh out of college, just starting out their careers, or a little more seasoned—but they are the leaders of the future. Attendees came to participate in workshops, network, and learn from established professionals at executive round tables.

The event included four breakout sessions on the topics of “Developing Executive Courage,” “Moving Up the Ladder,” “Lions, Tigers, Millennials—Oh My!” (on general differences in the workplace), and “Reading Between the Lines” (creating a positive conversation within the workplace). A final panel session sponsored by the Upstate SC Alliance addressed economic development in the Upstate.
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Ten at the Top continued its role as convener of the Upstate Air Quality Advisory Committee in 2019, hosting their annual meeting in May. The Upstate remained within healthy Air Quality attainment levels, a standard that is meaningful for economic development and public health. This group plans to meet again in 2020, with the possibility of hosting a larger regional event as well.

Ten at the Top also continued to convene the network of city, county, and private planners from across the Upstate. This group met twice in 2019, once in the spring and again in the summer, to connect with each other and learn from professionals in the field. The first event featured a review of several local Upstate communities’ downtown revitalization efforts, and the second focused on environmental planning. This group intends to host three Coffee & Learn events next year, and hopes to begin review of the many comprehensive plans adopted by cities and counties across the region.
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The Upstate Mobility Vision
The Upstate will be a vibrant and connected region, where transportation policy and investments promote innovation, sustainable development, and economic prosperity for all residents and businesses.

The Connecting Our Future initiative concluded phase two in August of 2019, which included refining the proposed strategic goals and action plans for the initiative to focus on, as well as developing the Upstate Mobility Alliance. The Upstate Mobility Alliance is a coalition of public, private, and community partners who are committed to fulfilling the mobility vision. Through a few significant investments, Connecting Our Future is excited to have hired the first full-time Director of the Upstate Mobility Alliance.

The Alliance Director will lead the day-to-day operation of this initiative and coordinate the efforts of four working groups; Moving People, Active and Livable Communities, Technology and Innovation, and Mobility Investments.

Task Forces........................................4
Alliance Members.................................28

For more information about Connecting Our Future and information about related events and meetings please visit: www.connectingourfutureupstatesc.org
Senior Needs

Ten at the Top’s Senior Issues Group hosted a quarterly workshop series this year to educate and raise awareness amongst community stakeholders around issues facing our seniors today and into the future. With the number of Upstate residents over the age of 65 projected to rise from roughly 12% of the total population in 2010 to more than 25% by 2030, these are critical challenges that the region needs to address.

Topics for the workshops were selected from the Appalachian Council of Governments’ Senior Needs Assessment, and included Lifelong Learning, Food Access, Transportation, and Aging in Place. The events connected over 110 interested stakeholders and served to illustrate the concerns around availability of services for the Upstate’s senior citizens. The Senior Issues Group intends to spend the first quarter of 2020 compiling data to better inform stakeholder groups on these issues and will then hold three workshops that illustrate some best practices from senior service providers.
ENTREPRENEUR SUPPORT

Ten at the Top has been convening the Entrepreneur Support Providers Network with a focus on developing the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem. Led by Erin Ouzts, the network held quarterly workshops to give members an opportunity to connect, learn from each other, and empower their communities to support and develop local entrepreneurship.

The network began the year by identifying several priority areas to focus on throughout 2019. Work groups were formed to explore areas for collaboration around: (1) connecting the disconnected populations to entrepreneurial support and business resources; (2) sharing and celebrating the stories of local entrepreneurs; and (3) creating an efficient online system to connect various elements of the ecosystem. In addition to these focus areas, the network celebrated Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) for the second year. GEW is powered by the Kauffman Foundation and is held internationally each November with over 35,000 events in 170 countries.

The ecosystem building work will continue in 2020 through quarterly workshops and further development and implementation of strategies to impact the identified focus areas.
PIZZA & BEER REDEFINED

Ten at the Top is very grateful to the many business, organizations, and individuals that provide annual funding support. As an added benefit to board members and funding partners, TATT hosts a quarterly networking series, providing an opportunity to connect with others who support regional collaboration. These casual, after-hours gatherings are a great chance to network over a slice and a beer. They happen quarterly, each time at the facility of one of our funding partners, with a speaker who talks about his or her career journey.

This year we heard from diversity, inclusion, and equity advocate Dr. Nika White at ReWa’s Water Discovery Laboratory in April; from Nancy Whitworth, economic development director and interim city manager for the City of Greenville at Synterra’s offices in the Innovate building in downtown Greenville in June; from Lockheed Martin deputy site manager for Greenville operations, Benjamin Peat in the newly opened Skyline Exhibits and Design facility in September; and from Furman University president Elizabeth Davis at the office of Mavin Construction in November.

Network Events..........................4
Attendees....................................139
Slices of Pizza............................256
Online Resources

Ten at the Top plays an important role in compiling regional information and presenting resources for residents in the Upstate, in an effort to make it easier to locate services and activities across the region.

First created in 2017, Ten at the Top maintains seven interactive regional asset maps. These provide a wealth of information on aid organizations, public institutions, parks and landmarks, and much more. Categories include:

- Senior Services
- Child Well-Being
- Cultural Assets
- Outdoor Activity & Recreation
- Local Government Offices
- Schools, Colleges, & Universities
- Business Ecosystem

Ten at the Top also maintains a regional calendar as part of the #UpstateVibe365 campaign. Upstate Vibe is a community vibrant social media campaign that highlights the many activities across the region every day of the year.

The calendar was created specifically to showcase the Upstate as a destination for arts and culture, and the subsequent campaign encourages people to share their fun Upstate experiences on social media.
## 2019 Funding Partners

### Visionary Partners

- South Carolina
- Hughes Investments
- Michelin
- Prisma Health
- Hollingsworth Funds
- Clemson University

### Elevation Partners

- BMW Group Plant Spartanburg
- Fluor
- Trelleborg
- ReWa
- Greenville Business Magazine
- REI
- Skyline Exhibits & Design
- Milliken
- Spartanburg Water
- MAVIN Construction, LLC
- Piedmont Natural Gas

### Benefactors

- AnMed Health
- Bon Secours St. Francis Health System
- Duke Energy
- Laurens Electric Cooperative, Inc.
- Maddrey & Associates
- Oconee County
- Sherman College of Chiropractic Medicine
Advocates

AFL
Anderson Regional Joint Water System
Barnet Development
Better Business Bureau of Upstate SC
Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative
Bonitz
Broad River Electric Cooperative
Cintas
City of Anderson
City of Easley
City of Greer
Craig Brown
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GSP International Airport
Greenville Tech
J.P. Morgan Chase
Little River Electric Cooperative
Lockheed Martin
Salem Media
Sealevel Systems
Self Family Foundation
TD Bank
Upstate Home Care Solutions
Upstate SC Alliance
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Irv Welling

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Anderson Area Chamber of Commerce
Anderson University
   Brad Wyche
   Cardno
City of Abbeville
City of Pickens
Clayton Construction
Colliers International
Corley Plumbing
Easley Chamber of Commerce
ECPI University
Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce
Hulsey McCormick & Wallace
   Jeff Field
Limestone College
McMillan Pazdan Smith
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SC Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
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Shriners Hospital for Children
SouthState Bank
Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce
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Synterra
Tri-County Entrepreneurial Development Corp.
Tri-County Technical College
USC Upstate
West Carolina Tel
Western Upstate Association of Realtors

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Prisma Health

Irv Welling, III  
Welling Strategic

Rosylin Weston  
RAWeston Communication, LLC

Neal Workman  
Trehel Corporation
Ten at the Top envisions an Upstate region where collaboration, coordination, and cooperation across communities and business sectors makes us stronger together.

www.TenattheTop.org

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