



Media Release – Feb. 20, 2018
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County Leaders Take Pickens County Global

(Pickens County) A group of leaders from Pickens County recently returned from a trip to the Karlsruhe District of southern Germany. The group, consisting of County Council Chairman Roy Costner, Vice Chairman Chris Bowers, Alliance Pickens Director Ray Farley, County Attorney Ken Roper, and Tourism Director Jay Pitts, met with industrial and government officials with a view toward building increased economic, educational, and cultural ties between the communities. The trip was paid for from travel expenditures approved in the County’s 2017/18 budget. It began on Wednesday February 14th and concluded on Monday, February 20th.

As a part of the initiative, the delegation was able to tour the Baden area facility of ara-contact, which recently completed construction of its 3.6 million dollar facility in the Pickens County Commerce Park. The tour gave Pickens officials a firsthand look at the operations of ara-contact’s headquarters facility, as well as insight into the company’s long term plans for its Pickens operation. Additionally, the county group met with leaders of the Karlsruhe government, and began outlining plans for increased educational and cultural exchanges between the regions, which bear striking similarities in geography and climate. Officials discussed numerous avenues for beginning the relationship between the regions. While details would need to be developed further, the Pickens County group sees possibilities for students, graduates, and skilled workers to directly benefit. The county group extended an invitation to their counterparts in Germany to visit Pickens County in the coming year for further discussions.

Chairman Roy Costner said, “Our approach on this trip is a well-established mechanism for promoting economic development and tourism growth. Establishing “sister” communities abroad has been extremely helpful to our neighbors in Anderson, Greenville, and Spartanburg.

It is time for Pickens County to plant its flag on the big map and show the world what we have to offer. I know that this is just the beginning, and this small investment will bring rich rewards to our beautiful county.”

“It was great to be a part of something innovative. By doing something we’ve never done before, we have opened doors for some exciting opportunities for tourism, economic development, as well as cultural exchanges. We took a small step in showing the world how great Pickens County is, not only with our resources, but with our value of community, family, and culture as well. I ran on the idea that “it’s about people, not politics”. This trip was about people, expanding relationships with worldwide leader, era-contact, in our community and creating new relationships with the others. These relationships are the foundations that will be fruitful long after you or me,” said Vice Chairman Chris Bowers.

Alliance Pickens Director Ray Farley added, “From an economic development perspective, the Karlsruhe District and Pickens County have much in common. Both locations value the environment, education, and a skilled workforce, which gives us a foundation to work upon. I remain excited for the economic development of Pickens County and for the opportunities that international companies and community partnerships provide.”

Tourism Director Jay Pitts was equally impressed with the visit saying, “I was overwhelmed by what I saw and learned on this trip. There is no question that we can learn from each other by sharing ideas on bringing tourism to both communities. We were proud and honored to take Pickens County to the world, and we look forward to now bringing the world to Pickens County.”