



Elite swimmers compete in Greenville

Thumbs Up to the 2013 Southern Zone Age Group Championships for being in Greenville County this week and bringing more than 600 swimmers from 12 states for what is being called the first major nationwide event hosted by the Westside Aquatic Complex. Another Thumbs up goes to Team Greenville for being the host club and Greenville County Recreation for being part of the effort that submitted the bid two years ago to host this elite competition. Westside Aquatic, at 2700 West Blue Ridge Drive, offers an attractive venue for indoor swim competitions, and it was improved significantly during Greenville County's TRAC plan that created the funding for so many new or improved county parks. The aquatic center has, according to the website greenvillerec.com/parks/westside, an indoor 20-lane, 25-yard by 50-meter competition pool; an indoor 5-lane 25-yard heated therapy pool; a fun Zone, new locker rooms and a Paddock Evacuator System (that is, fresh clean air) and other amenities that surely helped influence the decision to locate this national swim meet in Greenville County. The benefits to the county, including surrounding cities, are huge. The swimmers and their families are expected to fill about 500 hotel rooms for this event that began Tuesday and concludes today. Clemson University is doing an economic impact study that will be released later. In addition to the hotel stays and food purchases, the event brings intangible benefits such as exposing many people to Greenville and the surrounding area and it surely entices some of them to return on their own. Greenville County is appropriately proud of Westside Aquatic because it has become one of the premier tournament facilities in the Southeast and is a testament to the vision of County Council and Recreation District leaders who supported the TRAC plan.