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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mega Site Certified in Northeastern South Carolina

Dillon, S.C. – The 1,920 acre Carolinas I-95 Mega Site, located in northeastern South Carolina, is now a certified industrial site. The property enhances the region's ability to compete for major industrial projects that need 1,000 acres or more.

“With our hardworking people, our proximity to markets, our technical colleges and our great transportation system, our area has always had a good story to tell to folks who seek to locate their businesses here to maximize their return,” said Jeff Mckay, executive director of the North Eastern Strategic Alliance. “With the certification of this property, our message will be even more compelling, and we will be able to compete for even larger industrial projects.”

The South Carolina Department of Commerce created and enforces the state's standards by which an industrial property can be labeled as “certified”, meaning shovel-ready for acquisition and development. Under the state program, a property must be completely analyzed for potential cultural and environmental issues, be of sufficient size, have all ownership issues resolved and have infrastructure – water, sewer, roads – either in place or specifically planned before it can be called a certified site. The process to form this unique property began two years ago.

Collaboration Is Key

Officials from Marlboro Electric Cooperative, the North Eastern Strategic Alliance, and Dillon, Marion and Marlboro Counties had talked informally for years about positioning their area to attract large economic development projects. These efforts crystallized into a formal exploratory group that first met in April 2008 to talk about how a mega site could be created somewhere in Northeastern SC. The collaborative talking eventually resulted in the identification of a property, a plan to get it certified and the execution of that plan.

“This mega site came to fruition because the county leadership in this area and their local economic developers committed to working together,” said Bill Fleming, president of Marlboro Electric Cooperative and a key member of the exploratory committee. “Putting together a parcel of land large enough to be called a mega site is an extremely

complicated process. Before you can even get to the engineering study, examinations have to be made of marketing potential, the actual geographic location and the ownership and infrastructure issues that come with that. Even in the midst of these very complicated discussions, the overriding spirit was one of working together to do the very best job possible for this region's citizens."

After the first meetings, the exploratory team identified the I-95 Gateway Industrial Park as the property in the region that seemed to have the most potential to be developed into a mega site. Located directly adjacent to Interstate 95 with the potential for rail access and options to purchase large tracts of additional land to take the total property to well over 1,000 acres, the group began focusing more on that tract. Their selection of the property as a possible mega site received an additional affirmation in March 2009 with the release of a study of potential South Carolina mega sites commissioned by the SCDOC and completed by Wilbur Smith Associates, a Columbia based engineering firm. The Wilbur Smith report identified the area in and around the I-95 Gateway Park in Dillon as one of three sites in South Carolina with the features and potential to become a competitive mega site.

"After the release of the SCDOC's study, it was truly all systems go for our team," said Fleming. "We addressed the final items needed to meet the standards of the state's industrial property certification program and hired Alliance Consulting Engineers for the property analysis. The SCDOC approved Alliance's property report, and our mega site became officially certified. It is a very exciting time, and a very wonderful thing – something the local leadership here made possible," he said.

Why A Mega Site?

The mega site concept began to gain national attention in the earlier part of this decade when economic developers for the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), the federally owned utility serving Tennessee, and large portions of Alabama, Mississippi, and Kentucky, wanted to target extremely large industrial projects, such as auto manufacturers, for their service area. To lure them, they began working with the site selection consulting firm, McCallum Sweeney, out of Greenville, SC. With their help, TVA began to systematically put together several large tracts of land, all well over 1,000 acres, for the purpose of competing for and winning large economic development projects. In the last six years, industrial facilities for Volkswagen, Paccar, SeverCorr, Toyota and Dow Corning/Hemlock Semiconductor have located on TVA mega sites.

"The kinds of projects that typically locate on a mega site often bring many direct jobs," said Ralph U. Thomas, president of the South Carolina Power Team representing the electric cooperatives and Santee Cooper in their industrial recruitment efforts. "They also frequently need suppliers close by which results in additional industrial locations and job growth in the mega site region."

What Are The Sites Features?

The Carolinas I-95 Mega Site offers the following features:

- The largest certified mega site in South Carolina
- Class I rail access by CSX, the only mega site in the state with this feature
- 4,800 feet of frontage on I-95 with immediate access to Interchange # 190
- Port access in Charleston (138 miles), Savannah (205 miles) and Wilmington (100 miles)
- 1,275,790 population, 602,852 labor force and 79,953 employed in manufacturing within 60 miles

What is next?

With the property certification behind them, the Carolinas I-95 Mega Site team is wasting no time in sharing their message with site consultants and business executives.

“We are already working with our communications advisors to determine our targets, message and materials so that we can make this special property known,” said Thomas.

Fleming echoed Thomas’ statement and reiterated again the opportunity for the region. “The Carolinas I-95 Mega Site has some key site attributes – rail service, over 1,000 acres – that are very rare nationally. We look forward to sharing this message in the industrial recruitment process,” he said.