

September 2, 2008

Energy concerns voiced at meeting

By Lark Reynolds
GREATER GREER NEWS

Don Goodfellow said he doesn't understand why the discussion of potential energy solutions so often implies there can only be one solution.

"Why do you think they're competing alternatives?" Goodfellow said, referring to alternative fuels vs. drilling domestically for oil.

He made his comments during a town hall meeting in Greer on the nation's energy resources and policy hosted by U.S. Rep. Bob Inglis, R-Travelers Rest.

About 25 people showed up to voice their thoughts on energy solutions. Their ideas and comments differed from others voiced at similar town meetings in the Upstate, Inglis said.

"In the other three town meetings, there were people that were very devoted to drilling as the main solution," Inglis said. "Tonight, we had people that actually said that they didn't think that drilling was the whole of the solution."

Murray Fisher, who identified himself as a Democrat, asked what plans Inglis had to capitalize on the renewable energy sources that are available in South Carolina, such as wind and solar. Fisher said he works at General Electric, a major producer of wind turbines, and sees the potential in that industry.

"There is a position in the middle that is going to work best for the country," Fisher said.

Inglis' energy plan, which he presented at the meeting, includes expanding renewable energy, nuclear power and solar and clean coal technologies, requiring higher fuel efficiency standards in automobiles, increasing U.S. drilling efforts and refining capacity, and improving building design to reduce energy use.

He also placed an emphasis on developing hydrogen technology, especially in South Carolina, thanks to a high concentration of hydrogen scientists at the Savannah River Site and the University of South Carolina and Clemson University's research campuses.

Inglis faces Democratic challenger Paul Corden in the Nov. 4 general election for the 4th District congressional seat.

Corden said in a later interview that Congress' emphasis must be on developing alternative fuels, especially solar.

"One of the things that we can pretty well count on for the foreseeable future is the sun. And I would very much like to see a lot of the government's energy, with private industry, focused on developing solar power," Corden said.

He also said he is not opposed to "reasonable drilling alternatives," but such a solution would be short term.

