

Time to stand up and be counted almost over

Census forms due Friday

By Colin DeVries

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In an effort to save taxpayer dollars, the U.S. Census Bureau is asking Greene County to mail back their census forms by Friday.

By Tuesday, Greene County's participation rate is at only 46 percent — meaning, of the census forms delivered to registered addresses, only 46 percent have been returned.

Data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau ranks Greene County among the lowest in participation rate, only being surpassed by Sullivan County at 39 percent.

The forms — which are due to be postmarked by April 16 — have been distributed by the U.S. Postal Service and hand delivered by census workers in other areas.

Some of the major challenges facing the county are potential second homeowners, said Shelly Lowe, U.S. Census spokeswoman.

"If there is a lot of second

homes what we do is indicate that each one is occupied or unoccupied," she said.

Lowe said there's an option on the form for people to list if they own a second home and where it is.

The areas of the county with the lowest participation are Mountaintop communities, where the village of Tannersville is at 23 percent and the village of Hunter is at 24 percent. Valley communities more than double Mountaintop participation rates, with the village of Catskill at 53 percent, the village of Athens

at 58 percent and the village of Coxsackie at 67 percent.

New York State's total participation rate is 62 percent, the lowest in the Northeast region. Vermont and Maine both are at 63 percent. The top-rated states are in the upper Midwest region, with Wisconsin leading at 77 percent participation.

Greene County's economic development officials have stressed the importance of returning the forms and getting accurate figures.

"The 2010 Census is Please see Census, page A12

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import to Greene County's future," said Warren Hart, director of Greene County Economic Development, Tourism and Planning. "The data gathered will determine the vital services as well as representation at all levels of government."

The data collected will play a critical role in reshaping our U.S. Congressional districts and state government districts. Census data will also be used in distributing \$400 billion per year in federal funding to local governments, according to Hart.

Census data is used strategically in determining locations for new hospitals, improving schools, building new roads, expanding public transportation and creating new maps for emergency

responders.

The 2010 Census has been called one of the shortest forms in U.S. Census history, taking about 10 minutes to complete, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Lowe said she hopes most of the forms "are just sitting on kitchen counters waiting to be mailed back" because it would result in significant savings when census enumerators take the streets in May.

"It costs only 42 cents for mailing back but it costs us about \$57 per household that we have to visit," she said. "It's a huge undertaking in May and we'll have to hire 700,000 people nationwide to do it."

Training for enumerators begins this month and household visits begin May 1.

"The 2010 Census is an historical event that will help shape the future of our country," said Dr. Robert M. Groves, director of the U.S. Census Bureau. "It is vital that everyone is counted once and only once and in the right place."

If you have not received a census form please call 1-866-872-6868.

More information on the U.S. Census, including updated participation rates, is available at 2010.census.gov.

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