100 apply to be new Oconee

Council members to meet at 9 this morning to discuss their

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WALHALLA — There's something about the Oconee county administrator job opening that is attracting applicants as bees to honey.

Whether it is due to the tough economy and the hordes of hungry job-seekers out there, or simply the allure of working and living in a beautiful hideaway amid lakes and mountains, the number of applications pouring in is far exceeding expectations.

An Appalachian Council of Governments official participating in the search for a new county administrator said Friday that the number of applications already had reached the 100 mark. Joe Newton, deputy director at the Council of Governments, not only has been pleasantly surprised with the quantity, but also quality, of the applications.

"These are very good applications," said Newton, who was meeting later Friday afternoon with County Council Chairman Reg Dexter concerning the search for an administrator.

Newton said Dexter would be getting a look at the applications for the first time. He said the other councilmen have not seen them.

"We've received a large number of highly qualified candidates," Newton added. "There are about 25 or so worth consideration."

The meeting between Newton and Dexter comes ahead of today's special County Council workshop to discuss the administrator job search. The 9 a.m. meeting is at the Council Chambers, 415 S. Pine St., Walhalla.

Dexter said this week that he would like to bring up at today's meeting the possibility of hiring a professional firm to help council in the selection process.

According to Dexter, because the search for a new administrator was extended regionally, he thinks there should at least be a discussion on whether to bring in professional consultants who are experts in this type of process.

County boss

search for a new administrator

The County Council fired Administrator Dale Surrett April 14. In May, the two sides signed a settlement agreement that pays Surrett an additional $53,000 on top of his regular $106,000 salary plus benefits for one year.

County officials will continue to accept applications for the position until Wednesday. The County Council hopes to make an offer to the top candidate by Aug. 20.