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TOO MUCH WASTED TIME



Table Rock Park receives thousands of visitors each month.

BY MONICA KREBER
THE JOURNAL

If Ken Sloan were to prioritize his favorite destinations in Oconee County, he would start with the Chattooga River first, then Lake Jocassee and Issaqueena Falls.

However, Oconee County is filled with sights that Sloan, president and CEO of the Mountain Lakes Convention Visitors Bureau (CVB), believes everyone should experience this summer.

The Chattooga River offers white water rafting and kayaking, paddle-boarding, zip-line canopy tours, low and high ropes courses, scenic hiking trails and overnight camping.

"If you like outdoor adventures, that is adventure at its best," Sloan said.

Sloan fell in love with the river after he moved to Mountain Rest, which presented him with the opportunity to spend more time on the Chattooga.

"It is the oldest river in the nation, second-oldest in the world," Sloan said. "There's a lot of history behind and it's just absolutely beautiful."

Sloan enjoys the lakes for their boating adventures and waterfalls.

"You can rent boats on Lake Keowee and have lunch at the

Tiki Hut," he said. "Lake Keowee is a great lake to hangout on, but Lake Jocassee is just very unique - it's just an incredible lake."

Oconee County also has 29 waterfall trails.

"You can spend four or five days just going to different waterfalls," Sloan said.

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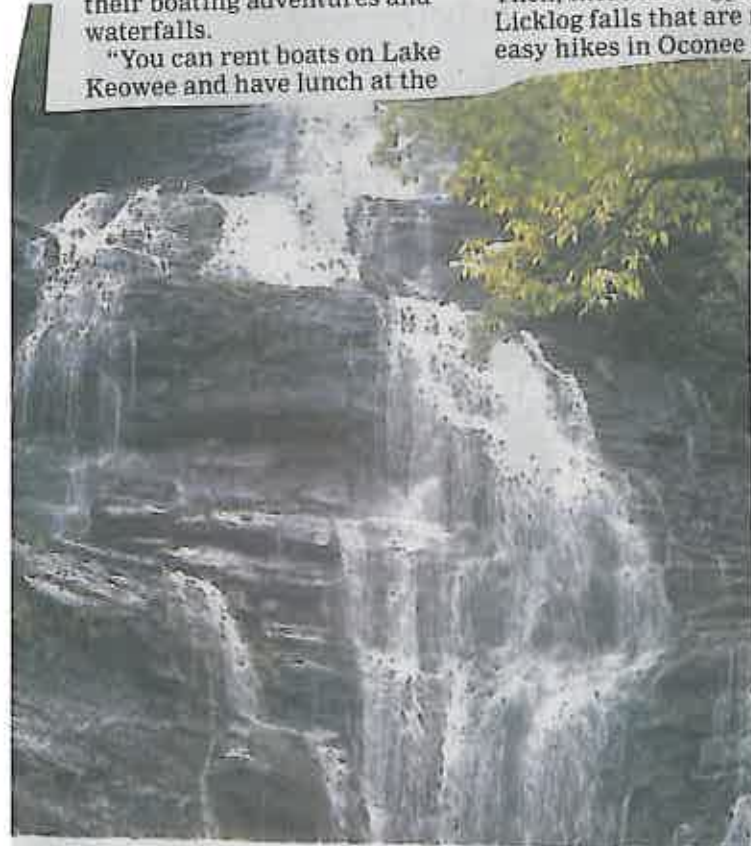
Ken Sloan
CEO of the Mountain Lakes Convention Visitors Bureau

One place Sloan really enjoys hiking to is Opossum Creek Falls - a somewhat challenging hike off the Chattooga River. Then, there are Pigpen and Licklog falls that are relatively easy hikes in Oconee County.

"You can swim in Pigpen Falls and swim down the river," he said. "Another easy one is Brasstown Falls ... there's an incredible swimming hole."

Those are just a few of the waterfalls. Sloan said there are developing towns in the area that people should explore, as well.

"Westminster has seven train bridges, which is more than any other city in the nation," Sloan said.



Lake Jocassee features waterfalls for viewers to check out, walk around and swim under.

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King's Creek Falls is one of many iconic waterfalls in Oconee County.

"They've got new shops and restaurants, if you just want to go hang out a little bit. I love Westminster."

In Seneca there is Ram Cat Alley where visitors can shop and eat and enjoy Jazz on the Alley on Thursday nights. Mountain Rest has the Russell Homestead and Walhalla has the Oconee Heritage Center.

"There are historical markers all over the place," Sloan said.

The county should expect a good tourist season.

"I call it my '100 days of vacation,'" Sloan said. "Everything is packed. This is, by far, our busiest season."

It is also a busy tourist season for Pickens County, which features

its own share of mountains, lakes and rivers.

When Helen Hockwalt first came to Pickens, she was driving through the county and could see Table Rock out her car window – and it was love at first site.

Ridge Mountains.

"It's very much worth your time," Hockwalt said. "We're just blessed with all this scenery."

There is also Mile Creek Park, where visitors come to

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Ken Sloan

CEO of the Mountain Lakes Convention Visitors Bureau

"I said, 'This is where I want to live,'" she said.

Hockwalt is now a curator for the Pickens County Museum of Art and History, and encourages everyone to check out Table Rock State Park. The park has thousands of visitors each month, Hockwalt said.

"You will fall in love," she said.

Pickens County also serves as the entrance to Jocassee Gorges – an area featured in National Geographic as one of "50 of the World's Last Great Places – Destinations of a Lifetime" in 2012.

Within Jocassee Gorges there is Jumping-Off-Rock, a viewpoint above Lake Jocassee. It overlooks the Blue

camp, hike, hold picnics and reside in new rental cabins – 10 more cabins are under construction and will be open by the end of the year.

Pickens County also has a lot of museums to visit, in addition to theaters like the Brooks Center in Clemson and the Foothills Theater in Easley.

Hockwalt said she can't pick out her favorite aspect of places to visit in Pickens.

"It's like having a whole bunch of children – you can't name your favorite," she said. "There's a just a lot in this area. It's a really fun place."

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MUSEUM

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Sam's Club on Laurens Road and the Food Lion store on South Pleasantburg Drive "because we have no credit and we have no major cash to put

down as a security deposit."

The museum's site in downtown Greenville will be its first viable location.

In the three and half years the project has been around, nothing like the space at Camperdown Way has become available, Ruby said.

Not only is it located in a fairly central, highly visible area, but the building's owners "are willing to work with us with our credit and cash flow problem," he said.

The ultimate plan is to house the transportation museum in at least a 60,000-square-foot facility that is accessible for visitors and tourists.

"This is not just a Greenville or Upstate project. This is a regional, if not national and worldwide project, and we plan on building," Ruby said. "We know we're going to wind up eventually creating at least 50 jobs and if we get into a big building, it will be up to 150 jobs, all high paying."

He said people from across the country have been waiting for the museum to open. The project has an email list and online petition with names well into the thousands, he said.

"We haven't been told that anybody hates the project or we're crazy for trying to do it," he said. "That's why we keep plugging away at this thing. We just need some cash to get us open. We believe it's going to be self sustaining, based on everything we know."

Mini World of Trains is seeking donations from individuals and corporations to make the ultimate dream of Miniature World of Trains a reality.

More details about the project can be found at <http://www.Miniaature-WorldofTrains.com>.



Miniature World of Trains project will debut this fall

PLANNED MUSEUM TO OPEN ON SMALLER SCALE

By Angelia Davis

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Developers still have plans to open a large transportation museum in Greenville that could draw visitors from all over the world.

But for now, the proposed Miniature World of Trains project will debut this fall on a smaller scale at 7 Camperdown Way in downtown Greenville.

Frank Ruby, president of Mini World of Trains, the non-

profit group developing the museum, said its Beta version of the Miniature World of Trains, the 3rd Annual Christmas Model Train 2013, and its "Mini Museum" will open in its new downtown location in phases, starting on Nov. 30.

Plans for a transportation museum project that would be similar in magnitude to the Miniatur-Wunderland in Hamburg, Germany, a railway model that features scenes spanning from Scandinavia to the United States,

were initially announced in 2010.

Ruby said the corporation hasn't had the cash flow and credit to make the project a reality.

"We have not had the large amount of cash come in that we had hoped would come in from the corporations and large private donors," he said.

Ruby said the corporation hadn't been able to get into buildings such as the former

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