

# 3 finalists to compete for broadband contract

## Firms to be interviewed Tuesday

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THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — Oconee officials have scheduled interviews next week with the top-three ranked companies vying for a contract to install fiber on the first phase of the county's proposed \$14.3 million broadband project.

The company awarded the contract would work on approximately 95 miles of the 270-mile network.

Two South Carolina companies and another from Georgia made the cut from 12 firms that responded to Oconee's request for proposals.

On Tuesday, a scoring committee will interview Edwards Communications of Columbia, Network Controls & Electric of Greer and Spalj Construction (doing business as Fiber Technologies) of Loganville, Ga.



Procurement Director Robyn Courtright said Wednesday that the interviews are part of the scoring process and would be held in executive session.

"The committee will score these three firms again at the conclusion of the interviews," Courtright said. Courtright said the committee

plans to recommend its top choice at a special County Council meeting Aug. 8.

Council voted in May to re-bid the work because a company that was originally chosen to install fiber throughout the entire 270-mile network for \$8.2 million could not secure a performance bond.

County Administrator Scott Moulder is hopeful the county has time to bid out the project in three phases, and have it completed by August 2013 as dictated by the terms of an almost \$10 million federal broadband grant the county received last year.

Moulder said that the cost per foot in the bids submitted by the competing firms were comparable to the pricing associated with the \$8.2 million contract that fell through.