$3.5M project could locate at Oconee industrial park

First reading of FILOT deal set for tonight

BY STEVEN BRADLEY
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — A manufacturer that would occupy a 50,000-square-foot pad at the Oconee Industry and Technology Park is slated to come before county council for first reading as an economic development project tonight.

Dubbed "Project Thermal," the company would locate its South Carolina operations inside the park on S.C. Highway 11, promising at least $3.5 million in capital investment.

Upon completion of its build-out, it would create between 30 and 40 new jobs at the site, according to Oconee County economic development director Richard Blackwell.

The site is one of two pads at the industrial park — the other is 300,000 square feet — that have been prepared with a three-inch gravel layer atop graded soil to aid in development of the sites for ready tenants.

The pads are 98 percent compacted, with 1 percent slope and a dedicated detention pond in place, Blackwell said.

"Essentially, (they are) ready for vertical development once a little finish grade is complete with the pad sites," he said.

A BMW supplier, known as Project Mackinaw, is close to finalizing an agreement to occupy the larger pad — its fee-in-



County council will get the ball rolling on bringing another tenant to the Oconee Industry and Technology Park at its meeting tonight.

FILE

FROM PAGE A1

lieu-of-tax agreement has passed two readings, with the third expected sometime in March — meaning Project Thermal would locate at the site of the 500-square-foot pad.

In return for the promised capital investment, the county would put in place a FILOT agreement with Project Thermal that would lower its tax assessment from 10.5 to 6 percent, while locking its millage at 215.0 for 20 years.

Once a planned workforce development center — which would include a Tri-County Tech campus, career center and adult education for the school district, and Oconee's economic development offices — as well as projects Mackinaw and Thermal are in place, Blackwell estimated the park would be about two-thirds full, leaving approximately 100 acres for development remaining inside the park.

sbradley@upstatetoday.com | (864) 973-6128