Agencies receive tourism grants

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WALHALLA — Grants totaling $30,000 for 15 agencies will go to the Oconee County Council for final approval after action Thursday by the county Parks, Recreation and Tourism Commission.

The commission met Thursday in Walhalla to whittle down the nearly $40,000 in grant requests from local Accommodations Tax revenue to the $30,000 in funds available. The approved list will be sent to County Council, which is scheduled to consider the requests March 19.

Two of the 17 agencies that applied for grants – the Bertha Lee Strickland Museum and the 9/11 Memorial – were moved to the fall 2013 grant cycle. Officials said neither of the agencies would be hindered by moving to the fall cycle.

The Parks, Recreation and Tourism department's request of $1,190 for 10,000 camping brochures was the only request to be approved for 100 percent of its eligible amount. All of the other 14 agencies were funded at 85 percent of their eligible amounts. The commission then put an additional $49.40 into a request by the Patriot Hall Association for billboard advertising. That additional money was the amount remaining in the $30,000 pool after the other amounts had been approved.

The largest single grant approved by the commission was $8,478.75 for roof repairs to the Walhalla Civic Auditorium (WCA). Officials had applied for $30,234.

"We're very pleased that we did get the $8,478.75 from ATAX," WCA Business Manager Bill Chiusano said. "They've shown a great deal of support for WCA and its mission."

Seneca Fest was approved for $5,907.50, followed by the South Carolina Apple Festival (Westminster), $3238.50, and the Upstate Heritage Quilt Trail, $3,058.30.

Other approved grant amounts are: Historic Old Pickens Foundation, $595; Walhalla Chamber Mayfest/Art of Living Festival, $776.70; Walhalla Partners for Progress, $1,275; West Union Fun in the Sun Festival, $637.50; Blue Ridge Arts Council, $352.75; Oconee Heritage Center, $1,363.40; Patriot's Hall Association billboard, $716.65; Patriot's Hall Association Advertising, $369.75; Collins Children's Home Mud Run, $1,402.50; and Westminster Chamber advertising, $637.50.

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