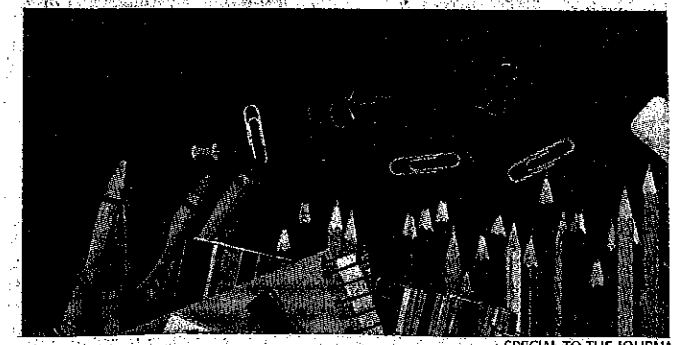


SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

A variety of back-to-school supplies will be exempt from sales tax throughout the state this weekend, in addition to other items including clothing and shoes.

Annual tax-free weekend begins today across SC

Walhalla-area students invited to Back to School Bash Tuesday

BY JUSTIN LEE CAMPBELL
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — As the first day back to school approaches, school supplies are in high demand.

Luckily for parents and families, tax-free weekend starts today and runs through Sunday.

Certain items are exempt from both the state's 6 percent sales tax and local sales taxes, according to the South Carolina Department of Revenue's website.

Items include paper, notebooks, pens and pencils, book bags and computers. Clothing, shoes, bed linens and bath towels are also included. The Board of Economic Advisors predicts shoppers will save about $2.25 million statewide, according to DOR.

Walhalla Area Chamber of Commerce executive director Vanessa Penton said examples of items not on the tax-exempt list are jewelry, cosmetics, furniture and eyewear.

"Tax-free weekend in South Carolina will be a great opportunity for parents to save on their purchases and will provide an opportunity to purchase back-to-school items to donate even if you don't have children in school," Penton told The Journal. "The School District of Oconee County is always appreciative of donations of back-to-school items. This helps them make sure that each child begins the school year with the appropriate tools they need to be successful in the classroom."

IF YOU GO

What: Back to School Bash
When: Tuesday, 6-8 p.m.
Where: Near the green space on Walhalla's Main Street
Cost: Free entry, food and face painting at additional charge

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School supplies and other items can be donated at the district office on South Pine Street in Walhalla on Monday and Tuesday.

Donations from the community will be handed out at Tuesday night's Back to School Bash, an event sponsored by the Walhalla Chamber and the school district. The free event for all students of the Walhalla school area will run from 6-8 p.m. on Walhalla's Main Street near the green space, according to Penton. Food from schools and clubs will be available for purchase.

The schools included in the event include James M. Brown, Keowee, Tamassee-Salem and Walhalla elementary schools, Walhalla Middle, Walhalla High and Faith Christian School, according to the chamber.

"The bash ... is to celebrate the spirit of unity within our schools," Penton said.

Kids will be able to play on bouncy houses provid-

"Area businesses and churches have been invited to participate by donating back-to-school items that will be distributed during the event," Penton said. "We thank our businesses who have already generously stepped up to provide these items."

Items include pencils, pens, paper, notebooks, backpacks and art supplies.

Spokeswoman Sharon Sanders said SDOC appreciates the donated supplies from local businesses and community members.

"The donations received during this event will help students in need get off to a good start with all the supplies required for school success," Sanders said. "But the schools do accept donations throughout the year to assist students in need, as well as students moving into the district who need assistance."

The Back to School Bash is a rain-or-shine event, according to Sanders.

Weather-related updates