Broadband ordinance gets final council OK

BY NORMAN CANNADA
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WALHALLA — Oconee County took another step toward making its broadband Internet program a reality with final approval Tuesday night of an ordinance that provides a rate structure to sell the service to Internet service providers (ISP).


Moulder

The ordinance gives authority to County Administrator Scott Moulder to negotiate with ISPs. He said the service is operational and could be ready for companies to sell to customers soon. He said three ISPs have already agreed to pro-

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OK: 3 ISPs agree to provide service

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vide service in Oconee County.

"The system is operational in most areas, and we can now start providing commercial lit service to a customer as long they agree on the pricing," Moulder said after Tuesday's County Council meeting. "We have been working with a few of them at this point, and I think we are pretty close. I expect real soon to be putting this thing to work."

In addition to the ISPs, Moulder said the county had also received eight "letters of intent" from companies interested in getting involved in some form of partnership, including the possibility of management of the system.

"Ultimately I would like to take my staff off the management of the system and work with a company that has the history and the capabilities to manage this thing the way it should," he said.

Moulder said providing broadband service to rural "last-mile service areas" will be a priority.

"There will be an objective established in our relationship that last-mile service in rural areas is a primary focus; it will be through negotiations with whatever company we decide to work with," he said.

In other business, the council re-elected Joel Thrift to a third one-year term as chairman of the council. Paul Corbeil was re-elected vice chairman, and Wayne McCall was re-elected chairman pro tem.

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