Broadband project gains momentum

Council to award 2 contracts worth almost $4 million



Network Controls & Electric subcontractors install conduit during the first phase of Oconee's $14.3 million broadband project. The company is in line to receive a new $3.4 million contract tonight for the second phase of the project.

FILE PHOTO

BY CARLOS GALARZA
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — An Upstate firm hired for the first phase of Oconee County's broadband project is on a roll.

County officials are poised to offer Network Controls & Electric a $3.4 million contract at tonight's County Council meeting for the second phase of the project.

Council also will vote on dishing out another broadband contract worth almost $500,000.

Network Controls of Greer is currently completing the $2.7 million first phase that entailed installing 95 miles of fiber optic. Council last month approved another $952,337 to the company for additional work related to connecting anchor institutions such as schools and public safety facilities to the broadband network.

Under the new contract to be awarded tonight, Network Controls would extend the fiber-optic network another 96 miles at a cost of $5.74 per foot.

Pricing includes 10 additional miles for connecting anchor institutions, and installing a cable

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IF YOU GO

What: County Council meeting
When: 6 p.m. tonight
Where: Council Chambers, 415 S. Pine St., Walhalla

BROADBAND: 'We have already received some federal funds'

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monitoring system for the entire 270-mile project that is funded largely by a $9.6 million federal grant.

Network Controls beat out five other companies vying for the second phase of the broadband project.

County Administrator Scott Moulder said Monday that Network controls should be ready to roll from one phase to another on the project.

"At this point we are pleased with the work they've done," Moulder said.

Moulder said the county is on track to implement the project in three phases.

Oconee must first incur an expense and show that matching funds have been used to get grant money.

"We have already received some federal funds," Moulder said.

Another company, GeoVision of Sylva, N.C., also stands to profit from the broadband project at tonight's meeting.

County official are recommending that council approve a contract worth $448,360 with GeoVision for engineering services related to the project — including construction inspection, installation of route marker posts to mark the location of installed conduit at 500-feet intervals, engineering and permitting for an additional 50 miles on the network, and collection of GPS coordinates for installed fiber points and entry into the county's GIS system.

Also on tonight's agenda:

- A public hearing on an ordinance authorizing an agreement between the county and the school district for the use of county funds to help finance sewer service to the new Walhalla High School;
- A resolution to formalize the transfer of property by the Foxwood Hills Property Owners Association for the construction of a fire substation; and
- The awarding of a contract worth $157,195.24 to Joel Davis Construction to build the Foxwood Hills substation.

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