Company bringing 77 jobs to Oconee

BY CARLOS GALARZA-VEVE
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WALHALLA — Plastic Products Co., one of the top-ranked female-owned businesses in the United States, is expanding its footprint into Oconee County.

The Oconee County Council will hold a public hearing tonight and take a final vote on a fee-in-lieu-of-tax agreement with the Minnesota-based company.

Plastic Products Co. is a leader of custom plastic, metal and ceramic injection molding.

Terms of the agreement posted on the county's website call for Plastic Products to invest a minimum of $2.5 million over five years, including a new building estimated at $800,000.

The company will directly employ 77 workers who will be paid an average hourly wage of $13.68. Another 29 indirect jobs would result from the company doing business in Oconee.

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"This is a new business establishing operations in Oconee County," Richard Blackwell, executive director of Oconee Economic Alliance, said Monday.

Describing the announcement as "exciting times" for Oconee, Blackwell said Plastic Products is looking to grow its Southeast client base, of which Johnson Controls is a primary customer. Johnson Controls, a maker of interior systems for automobiles, including batteries, has a plant in Oconee.



Blackwell

A cost-benefit analysis projects that over a 20-year period Plastic Products would bring a total local benefit of almost $7 million at a cost of almost $94,000 to the county.

Blackwell said he expects Plastic Products to grow both in jobs and investment.

Bob Griessel, the company's director of manufacturing for the southern region, declined to comment about the company's plans. He said an official announcement would be made after tonight's council meeting.

State officials are expected to announce Wednesday that Plastic Products Co. will make an investment of $3.2 million in Oconee.

Aside from its headquarters in Lindstrom, Minn., Plastic Products operates facilities in Princeton, Minn., Lebanon, Ky., Greenville, Ky., Greenfield, Tenn., West Branch, Iowa, and Moline, Ill.

"We beat North Carolina for this investment," Blackwell said. "It will result in at least 77 new jobs for our community."

Also tonight, council will hold second reading on ordinances establishing the county budget, the school district's budget and Keowee Fire Department special tax district budget. Also getting a second reading is an ordinance to impose a one percent capital project sales tax subject to a referendum.

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