

## Deal means Lake Keowee restaurant plans can move ahead

By Ray Chandler

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SENECA — A businessman said Wednesday that an agreement has been reached to clear the way for a planned lakeside restaurant off Doug Hollow Road, and the restaurant will probably open on schedule next year.

Richard Cottingham, of Lake Keowee Investors Inc., said the agreement was reached with property owners near the site. His group will obtain building permits within two weeks, Cottingham said, and the official groundbreaking will be held in mid-August.

"We still plan to open in May 2012," Cottingham said.

Cottingham said the specific terms of the settlement reached with adjoining property owners is sealed by a confidentiality agreement.

At issue were easements allowing access to the lake purportedly granted to the Kelley family as original owners of the property when portions of it were acquired by Crescent Land and Timber, an entity of Duke Energy, in 1966.

The plans for the restaurant call for a new section of Doug Hollow Road to be built and for the present road to be abandoned. Nearby landowners, principally members of the Kelley family, raised objections to the rerouting of Doug Hollow Road, which they say will cut off their longstanding access to the lake, particularly to a community boat ramp.

The land transferred in the 1966 deed has been sold multiple times and now a portion of it is the property owned by Lake Keowee Investors Inc.

However, according to Adam Artigliere, attorney for Oconee County in this matter, the grantors in each subsequent sale did not reserve any easements or access across the land for the Kelley family, as original owners, or their successors.

Oconee County filed a lawsuit in May asking the Circuit Court to determine what if any property rights existed.

"We're glad that all that is settled and behind us and we can move ahead," Cottingham said.

The octagonal-shaped two-story restaurant and bar will accommodate over 200 inside and on the wrap-around deck, Cottingham said, and will have adjacent to it a 4,000 square-foot glass-enclosed event center. A large central fireplace in the main building will be served by a 48-foot chimney that will look like a lighthouse and will serve as the restaurant's trademark.

A 10-slip boat dock will make the restaurant accessible from the lake as well as by road.

The restaurant and event center will employ 20 people and pump from \$4 million to \$5 million annually into the local economy by Cottingham's estimates.

Cottingham said he expects his group will hire a general manager as early as next week and then move toward hiring a chef.



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