LOCAL NEWS

Group wants tourists to flock to Pickens

Business plan to explore attractions, develop Web site, new logo

By Julie Howle
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A group formed by Pickens County Council to help direct and coordinate tourism efforts is pushing forward with ideas ranging from marketing and hiring an executive director to studying State 11 as a potential premier tourism spot.

Board members for Tour Pickens County, a group formed last year, have developed a draft business plan that lays out goals for its first year and the next five.

"Tourism is a great revenue generator and a great economic development tool for this county," board Chairman Dick Krull said.

Board member Jeff Martin said they will present the business plan to County Council members March 15 and will get council's feedback and goals.

He said a final plan will be presented to county officials by April 1.

Part of the plan includes a request for $85,000, which would cover an about $60,000 salary plus benefits, from Pickens County's general fund in the 2010-11 budget to hire an executive director for Tour Pickens County, Martin said.

That $85,000 is just a piece of a total $266,500 the draft plan allocates, the rest of which is from local and state accommodation tax money.

Recommendations in the draft plan include $75,000 for initial marketing from developing a new logo and redesigning the Web site to having collateral material and information placed at chambers of commerce, restaurants and tourist attractions.

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Another piece of the plan is allocating money to do a study on Highway 11 as a premier tourism spot and the impact of tourism and associated development, perhaps looking at development or sign standards, Martin said.

The Tour Pickens County group has identified more than 100 potential tourism sites in an asset inventory for the county, and Hagood Mill and State 11 along with Table Rock were identified as potential anchor sites.

"We believe as a group that we need anchor tourism sites, things that will draw people to Pickens County," Martin said. "People come in to go to Hagood Mill, and then they'll go to restaurants, they'll go to hotels, they'll go to baseball games."

Tour Pickens County also has a tourism summit planned for March 11 at Southern Wesleyan University for tourism executives and groups.

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