Leadership Oconee weekend events a 'success'

BY MONICA KREBER
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — When Richard Blackwell drove down Highway 28 to get to work Monday morning, he took a little bit of pride knowing that very road was cleaner because he helped beautify it over the weekend.

Leadership Oconee members tackled several countywide needs Saturday as part of their class project, titled Impact Oconee.

Leadership Oconee is sponsored by several organizations, local chambers of commerce and the School District of Oconee County with an aim at developing a fellowship of leaders in the area. A requirement for graduation from the Leadership Oconee program is to plan, fund and implement a class project.

Blackwell, a member of the class and executive director of economic development in Oconee County, said Saturday's events were a success.

"It went great," he said. "We were very satisfied with the small difference we made."

Bojangles sponsored a breakfast at Seneca Middle School at 7:45 a.m., when 25 volunteers showed up to receive assignments. The volunteer count rose to 45 during the day.

Impact Oconee took on six projects: cleaning up and reconstructing along the Foothills Trails in collaboration with the Foothills Trail Conference; hosting a yard sale to benefit Safe House in Oconee County; holding a men's clothing and household item drive for Our Daily Rest; cleaning up trash on Highways 28 and 123; cleaning Our Daily Bread; and cleaning up Wilderness Way Girls' Camp.



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Volunteers gather on the Foothills Trail to tidy up the Upstate. The cleanup was part of the Impact Oconee event held on Saturday.

Blackwell said all six projects went well.

"I know the Foothills Trail Project was a success, with about 25 total people out there working on it," he said.

Blackwell was part of the cleanup committees that took on picking up litter on Highways 28 and 123. Fifteen people cleaned up Highway 28 near the intersection of Highway 11, and around 30 to 40 bags of trash were collected.

"I think the worst thing I found was a dirty diaper," Blackwell said.

He added that a lot of items were collected for the clothing drive at Our Daily Rest. Some pressure washing and other improvements to the property were completed at Our Daily Bread.

Whitney Ellis from the Mountain Lakes Visitors and Convention Bureau was part of a group that helped with the yard sale project to benefit Safe House. She said the sale raised $1,750, and this amount will be doubled by a private donor who has agreed to match the money raised.

"It was amazing," Ellis said. "We really enjoyed it and got a lot out of it."

She said six volunteers helped with the yard sale – gathering, pricing and sorting items.

"It was great," she said. "We're looking forward to doing it again next year."

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