Jocassee turbines to arrive next week

THE JOURNAL STAFF

SALEM — The two turbines recently delivered to Salem as part of the upgrade to the Jocassee Pumped-Storage Hydro Station will make the last leg of their trip next week.

The route affected is about a quarter-mile on Highway 11 from the temporary parking location to Boone Creek Road and then Boone Creek Road and Jocassee Lake Road to the hydro station. A hydraulic platform trailer will take each turbine the last seven miles to the hydro station.

A lighted sign is posted at the intersection of Boone Creek and Jocassee Lake roads to notify affected residents. Boone Creek Road has two exits, so that part of the trip should not impact residents significantly; however, Jocassee Lake Road will be closed during the dates and times mentioned above.

Residents of Lake Jocassee Road have been notified individually of the closure and any special needs of those residents will be accommodated. No unauthorized vehicle or person will be granted entry to the road during the times of closure.

Arrangements have been made to have emergency medical and fire personnel and equipment on the scene for both days of the road closure. In addition, the Oconee County emergency response units will have a helicopter on standby and emergency watercraft on scene.

Oconee Medical Center will also have staff available. Both Anderson Area Medical Center and Greenville Hospital Systems have been notified and logistics have been set for the transportation, if necessary, of patients via Medivac helicopter.

The four-mile road is the only public access to Devil's Fork State Park, and to Lake Jocassee. The State Park will remain open during the closure, however; no vehicles may enter or exit during this time.

The turbines, manufactured by Voith Hydro in York, Pa., represent state-of-the-art design for greater efficiency and will increase capacity by 50 megawatts at the station.

These will be the first upgrades to Jocassee units 1 and 2 since they began commercial operation in 1973. Replacing the turbines will enhance hydro generation from the current maximum capability of 170 megawatts to 195 megawatts each. Each also will increase pumping capacity by 37 megawatts. Units 3 and 4 were upgraded in 2006 and 2007.

Lake Jocassee will be operated at least four feet below full pond during the upgrades to units 1 and 2, which are planned through May 2011.

When generating electricity, the Jocassee pumped-storage facility works as a conventional hydroelectric station. However, the facility also can reverse its turbines and pump back previously used water from Lake Keowee into Lake Jocassee. This allows Duke Energy to reuse the water to generate electricity for customers during periods of highest demand.

One turbine will be moved on Tuesday and the second is scheduled to be moved Thursday, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. each day.