

New Web site promotes Oconee tourism

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WALHALLA — Anyone around the world who Googles mountains or lakes in search of their next vacation now have a good shot of discovering Oconee County.

Thanks to Mountain Lakes Convention and Visitors Bureau's (CVB) new Web site, cyberspace explorers from around the globe could learn more about Oconee's waterfalls, hiking trails, fishing and whitewater rafting opportuni-

ties.

At <http://www.scmountainlakes.com>, visitors not only get to know more about Oconee's unique places and history but also where to dine and stay for the night.

"It's a work in progress," CVB Executive Director Ken Sloan said. "Our goal is to have everything finished by March 1."

Recently launched, the fledgling CVB is hopeful that its new Web site will give tourism promotion in the county a big boost.

"We want to try to build an all-

inclusive Web site that promotes our theaters, museums and recreation," Sloan said. "We also want to pull visitors outside county lines to what's available in Clemson and neighboring areas too."

The Web site's main page rotates images of a young boy holding a big fish, a kayaker, waterfall, boaters fishing, a hiker, a young woman splashing in the water and sights of mountains and lakes.

Recently, Mountain Lakes CVB received a plug by the South Carolina Department of Parks,

Recreation and Tourism for its steps taken to attract visitors.

At its Dec. 2 meeting, Oconee County Council approved \$10,000 from Accommodations Tax funds to the CVB to help launch the Web site, create a visitor's guide and brochure.

The county council voted in February to set aside \$480,000 during a three-year period to experiment with a CVB operation that could help the county tap into South Carolina's more than \$16 billion a year tourism industry.