

No. 1 priority is industrial park — for now

Moulder: Council could shift focus to Highway 11

BY CARLOS GALARZA
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — Until Oconee officials hear differently from Oconee County Council, development of the Golden Corner Commerce Park remains the county's top priority and not Project North on Highway 11.

County Administrator Scott Moulder said Friday that in accordance with the Economic Development Commission's Strategic Plan the Golden Corner Commerce Park is the No. 1 priority.

Hand-in-hand with the GCCP's development, Moulder said, is constructing a drip-irrigation Wastewater Sewer System at the site and eventually running sewer lines to the Interstate 85 exits in Oconee.

However, Moulder acknowledged the priority could shift to Project North if council so wishes.

"It all depends what decision council makes," Moulder said. "They've not given us any indication they want to shift priorities."

Moulder added that no timelines have been established for either project.

Officials rolled out conceptual plans at Tuesday



Moulder



Winchester

night's County Council meeting for developing 415 acres on Highway 11 near Walhalla that council wants to buy.

According to the plans, half of the property would be turned into a recreational complex and the other half would be reserved to attract light industry.

The recreational component of the plan includes clusters of baseball and soccer fields, a 50,000-square foot civic center, 2,000-seat amphitheater, walking trails, picnic areas, playgrounds and parking.

The Foothills Area Family YMCA has indicated it would be interested in partnering with Oconee at the proposed site.

A public hearing on the proposed purchase of the Project North property is scheduled for the Nov. 23 County Council meeting.

Moulder said this week that a final vote on the land deal might be delayed to allow the BP Barber engineering firm an opportunity to present a more formal presentation of the plans than was presented Tuesday.

The 2007 Economic

PRIORITY: Officials working

FROM PAGE A1

Development Strategic Plan notes that Oconee has delayed much too long in adding infrastructure to the Interstate 85 corridor and the GCCP. The plan emphasizes that it should be a top priority.

The Department of Health and Environmental Control approved a permit for a drip irrigation wastewater treatment plant at GCCP, but the permit does not cover sewer

lines to I-85. The wastewater treatment plant would cost \$4.3 million to build and an additional \$2.3 million to get sewer lines to the I-85 exits.

County Attorney Tom and Lowell Ross, the attorney for the Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority, have been working on a formal agreement on the infrastructure projects since June. No deal has been announced.

OJRSA Executive Director Tom Winchester said

on agreement

Friday that the agreement with the county is needed to release \$485,000 available through a federal grant for I-85 infrastructure.

He said another \$950,000 is available from a state grant.

The \$1.4 million combined from the two grants would be used toward the \$4.3 million sewer project at the GCCP, Winchester added.

carlos@dailyjm.com | (864) 973-FJ85

MORE ON PROJECT NORTH

Flea market vendors cheer proposed purchase. **A3**

SEE PRIORITY, PAGE A5