

# Oconee County official hopes to hire IT director

By **CARLOS GALARZA**  
carlos@dailyjm.com

**WALHALLA** — Oconee County Finance Director Kendra Brown urged County Council this week to leave the Information Technology (IT) budget uncut and to make plans for hiring an IT director.

Brown said the IT Department is headed in the right direction after years of shabby operations. She credited Columbia-based VC3, an Internet software and services provider, with helping the county get its IT act together.

According to Brown, the IT Department had been so mismanaged that stacks of hardware were purchased and not used. She said there was no system in place for retrieving information and called the phone system "a mess."

Brown said Tuesday that the proposed \$1,029,121 IT budget includes money for hiring a director for the budget.

"This touches so many departments and people,"

Brown said of IT services during Monday night's budget workshop. "Let's keep going in the direction we're going. Let's bring in an IT director."

Former County Administrator Dale Surrett came under fire last year for hiring VC3 to run IT following the dismissal of IT Director Richard Reeves. Some charged that Surrett handed a contract to VC3 without going through a bidding process.

At council's next meeting May 5, Richard Ellesin will make a presentation on IT services available locally.

Brown said she personally thinks Oconee would be better off with a combination of in-house IT services and outsourced professional services.

"That could give you the best value for your money," she said.

Whatever action council decides to take, Brown urged caution to prevent disruption to advances made in the department.