

Oconee County tourism arm branches out

BY CARLOS GALARZA
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — The Mountain Lakes Convention and Visitors Bureau is taking steps to make it on its own.

After three years tied to the Oconee Alliance, MLCVB is leaving its nest and is getting ready to fly solo.

"We're still in the process of breaking away from the Alliance, said Ken Sloan, executive director of Mountain Lakes.

The break should become official as soon as MLCVB is incorporated with the South Carolina Secretary of State's Office, and receives 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status from the IRS.

SEE TOURISM, PAGE A5



The Mountain Lakes Convention and Visitors Bureau recently moved into its new quarters at the Earle House in Walhalla. MLCVB is in the process of branching out on its own.

FILE PHOTO



Sloan

TOURISM: Sloan plans for retreat early

FROM PAGE A1

A spokesperson with the Secretary of State's Office confirmed Tuesday that MLCVB submitted its incorporation papers, as well as its 501(c)(3) attachment.

Sloan said he does not expect any problems getting the paperwork processed, which could take three to six months. Incorporation and non-profit organization credentials could be completed in the coming weeks,

he added.

In the meantime, Sloan said the organization has put together its bylaws and assembled a nine-member board of directors.

Board members include Blue Ridge Bank CEO Glenn Budin, Oconee Alliance Executive Director Jim Gadd, Keowee Rentals Manager Brian Greer, Realtor Lorraine Harding, Chattooga Belle Farm owner Ed Land, Denise McCormick, chief marketing officer at Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative, Phil Shir-

ley, director of Oconee County Parks, Recreation and Tourism, Sloan and attorney Scott Toussaint.

Sloan said he plans to convene the board for a retreat early next year.

"I'll have a consultant come and do a four hour retreat to go over what the expectations are," Sloan said.

Harding said she jumped at the opportunity of joining the board because she's been a fan of what Sloan has accomplished

next year

with Mountain Lakes.

"I was part of a committee formed by the Alliance that selected (Sloan) to head the CVB," Harding said.

Sloan said each member of the board brings a strong suit to the table, whether it's marketing, finances, legal or community leadership.

"I want this to be an active board of directors that'll help me build the CVB," Sloan said.