Oconee again named best in economic development

Magazine names area top micropolitan in state

BY STEVEN BRADLEY
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SENECA — Oconee County was recognized as the top performing community of its size in South Carolina in terms of economic development for the second straight year by a major trade magazine.

The Seneca micropolitan area, specifically, which encompasses all of Oconee, was recently named the top-performing micropolitan in South Carolina for the second consecutive year by Site Selection magazine.

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Glenn Buddin Oconee Economi Alliance chairma

A micropolitan area is defined by having an urban core of no less than 10,000 residents but no more than 50,000 in total population; there are 576 micropolitans in the United States. Site Selection magazine based its results on the area's 2015 calendar year economic development project wins.

Along with the top ranking in the state, the magazine ranked the Seneca area as the 22nd overall perfo ing micropolitan area in the United Stat which is the third top-30 ranking in thre years for Oconee.

Oconee County earned the ranking by ushering in 426 new jobs and $53 millio

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new capital investments, and the county had five of its six economic development-related projects meet the criteria established by Site Selection magazine.

"When it comes to landing economic development projects, no other similar size community in South Carolina has outperformed Oconee County, nor many across the United States," Oconee Economic Alliance chairman Glenn Buddin said in a news release. "This designation should not be taken lightly and is shared with other state and local entities, community partners and businesses, as economic development in Oconee County is a team sport."

Perhaps the county's top economic development success in 2015 — the Hartwell Village development on Lake Hartwell near Clemson, where Casto Southeast Realty plans a total capital investment of $35 million to $45 million and 300 to 400 jobs — doesn't count toward the ranking because it is a retail/restaurant project rather than manufacturing.

Oconee Economic Alliance director Richard Blackwell confirmed the county did not pay for the honor.



Blackwell

"We do submit our data for consideration to the magazine," he said, "but it is strictly performance-based."

Site Selection Magazine is an award-winning economic development trade publication that delivers expansion planning information to thousands of corporate executives, facility planners and site selectors of rapidly growing firms across the nation. It is also the official publication of the Global FDI Association and the Industrial Asset Management Council.

sbradley@upstatetoday.com | (864) 973-6128