Oconee council OKs gateway signs bordering Pickens County

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WALHALLA — Visitors to Oconee, as well as residents returning home, will soon be welcomed by new gateway signs at two prominent corridors leading into the county.

Aesthetically, the two signs — one located on U.S. Highway 123 as vehicles cross over Lake Hartwell from Clemson and the other on S.C. 11 near the border of Pickens County — will be modified versions of the design theme featured in the Destination Oconee plan.

Financially, the signs will be funded almost fully through grants — with roughly $37,000 coming from a South Carolina National Heritage Corridor grant and an equal amount received via State Senator Thomas Alexander through the S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism.

County administrator Scott Moulder told county council last week the signs were coming as recommendations from the county's Destination Oconee committee in terms of both location and appearance.

"They took the Destination Oconee document and the illustrations that went along with that, made some modifications to them — the rock is actually a flat rock (that is) grouted out rather than a stacked rock as you saw on the Destination Oconee plan, so the face of it has actually got a flat rock on it, which is more indigenous to our area," he said. "It's very similar to the features at some of our state parks with regard to their structures."

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SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

These renderings show planned gateway signs on U.S. Highway 123 (above) and on S.C. 11 (below) near Oconee County's border with Pickens.



SIGNS: Will cost

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Councilwoman Edda Cammick inquired as to whether the signs would fit in the space allotted for them.

"Yes, ma'am. The one on (S.C.) 11 is a smaller sign than the one on (U.S.) 123, which is why that one is a little cheaper. ... We feel comfortable that it should fit," Moulder replied.

Councilman Wayne McCall confirmed that the signs would be fully funded by grant money, and Moulder confirmed they would except for the $2,101 balance that is being paid by the Oconee Economic Alliance.

around $76K

The winning bid of a little more than $76,000 came from JF Contractors of Sumter. The only other bid that was considered was from Rite Lite Signs Inc., of Concord, N.C., but it was nearly twice — at almost $147,000 — as much as JF Contractors.

Companies also bid on a sign that would have been located on S.C. 11 near the exit from Interstate 85, but due to budgetary limitations, the DO committee opted to only award the bid based on two of the three signs.

The sign located on U.S. 123 was bid at roughly $43,000, while the sign on S.C. 11 was bid at about $33,000.