

# Oconee monitors broadband

## Moulder and AT&T work on mutual agreement

BY CARLOS GALARZA  
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — State legislation that could impact Oconee County's broadband project has resurfaced in Columbia.

County Administrator Scott Moulder said Wednesday that the Senate Judiciary Committee is hearing a House bill that surfaced last year.

Moulder gave the update during a meeting of the Oconee County Infrastructure Advisory Commission.

"We'd like to see a mutual agreement in that legislation," Moulder said.

Moulder said he's had phone and face-to-face meetings with AT&T representatives over the legislation. The giant telecommunications company is pushing the legislation in what it calls an attempt to level the playing field with public broadband startups such as Oconee's that are being funded with federal grants.

Jim Evers, a regional AT&T

official, attended the infrastructure meeting Wednesday.



Moulder

"Jim knows we're continuing to monitor the legislation," Moulder said, looking over at Evers. "We're trying to come to a mutual understanding that both parties can agree with so the Senate committee can push this thing out."

In the meantime, Moulder told Commission members

that the county continues to install fiber. He said more than 100 miles of conduit has been placed in the ground and approximately 50 miles of fiber through the conduit.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration awarded Oconee a \$9.6 million broadband grant in the summer of 2010.

Moulder said the county is looking to install a total of approximately 270 miles of fiber.

"We have to have all the grant money spent and projec

THE JOURNAL **A3**

## legislation

completed three years from the date that we started," Moulder said. "We've got about 18 months left to complete the entire installation."

Moulder said the county is in the process of drafting the specification for a request for proposal on the second phase of fiber installation on the project.

"I'd say we're within a month of getting done with those," Moulder said.

carlos@dailyjm.com | (864) 973-6685