Oconee named top 10 county

THE JOURNAL STAFF

A recently released report from NerdWallet named Oconee County as one of the best places in South Carolina for job seekers.

Oconee County was ranked ahead of No. 10 Anderson County and behind No. 8 Pickens County. Lexington County was ranked first on the list, with Greenville County ranked No. 5.

NerdWallet, a personal finance and consumer advocacy website, asked three fundamental questions when evaluating the state to gauge the top locations for job seekers: 1. Is the county growing? 2. Can you afford to live in the county comfortably? 3. Are most people employed?

Oconee was ranked ninth and saw a 4.9 percent increase in the working-age population from 2009 to 2011. Households earned a median income of $42,641, with homeowner costs of $1,086 a month and an unemployment rate of 7.5 percent as of October 2013.

Pickens County saw a 3 percent increase in the working-age population between 2009 and 2011, and its unemployment rate was 7.4 percent. Households in Pickens earned a median income of $42,241, with homeowner costs of $1,071 a month.

"Workers are attracted to Oconee County's growing economy," NerdWallet analyst Annie Wang said. "The county has seen a large working-age population increase over the last few years. The county

for job seekers

has strong energy and manufacturing industries, with top employers such as Duke Energy and BorgWarner. Oconee County and the entire northwestern region of South Carolina is seeing rapid growth, and we think the 'Golden Corner' is where workers should be looking right now."

Richard Blackwell, executive director of the Oconee County Economic Development Commission, said he was not surprised by the report results.

"It is great to see that others notice the potential Oconee County has," Blackwell said. "Our economy is becoming more diverse, and we must do everything possible to keep our momentum building towards creating more jobs for the citizens of our community."