

Oconee to award broadband contract

Seneca-based Technology Solutions to be system operator for \$622,500

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THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — Oconee officials are poised to award a broadband contract worth more than \$600,000 to a Seneca-based information technology firm.

The county plans to give a \$622,500 contract to Technology Solutions of South Carolina Inc. to be the System Operator for the broadband network.

The Seneca-based company was the only bidder to respond to a request for proposals.

County Council is expected to approve the award at its next meeting Tuesday night.

The contract would run until the construction phase of the broadband project is complete, which is estimated to be August of 2013.

Over the 22-month period, Technology Solutions would be paid approximately \$28,431.81 a month for its services.

Oconee was awarded a \$9.6 million grant last year through the Recovery Act funded Broadband Technology Opportunity Program to help establish a middle-



FILE PHOTO

Oconee County is poised to hire a system operator for its \$14.6 million broadband project.

mile broadband network.

A company out of Greer is being paid almost \$2.7 million by the county to install fiber on the first 95-miles of the proposed 270-mile network.

The county estimates it would cost more than \$14 million to complete the network.

County officials expect the first phase of the project to be

completed by February, but said they need a system operator immediately.

Procurement Office Director Robyn Courtright said the company would have to get work done before the first phase is completed.

Courtright said Technology Solutions would be responsible for installing equipment in the network operations centers and making broadband connections to more than 200 anchor institutions in the county, such as schools, libraries and fire stations.

Richard Ellison, a co-founder and CEO of Technology Solutions, has been consulting county officials on the broadband project since Oconee applied for the federal grant.

Despite being the lone bidder, county officials are confident of getting competent and professional services from Technology Solutions.

"We are familiar with their work from previous projects," Courtright said.