Seneca Daily Journal

Oconee trying to land big one

Tourism officials negotiating for regional tournament

BY CARLOS GALARZA
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — Using Lake Keowee as a carrot, Oconee tourism officials are negotiating with one of the most lucrative bass tournaments around to bring a regional event to the area in 2011.

Ken Sloan, director of the Mountain Lakes Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), said he is hoping to build on ties already established with FLW Outdoors.

Over the weekend, Lake Keowee and South Cove Park hosted a Savannah River Basin Division Forrest L. Wood (FLW) Outdoors tournament that attracted 150 boats and 300 anglers.

Daniel Atkins of Seneca won, catching a limit of five bass weighing 11.07 pounds. He won $5,915 in the tournament hosted by Wal-Mart, the local Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department and Mountain Lakes CVB.

Sloan said the tournament generated $135,000 to the local economy based on $225 per day spent by each angler on lodging, meals, gas and retail purchases.

Sloan said he is working with FLW for a second event this fall, and more importantly, a regional event next year that could attract 160 boats and 320 anglers from all across the United States for three days of fishing. He said FLW estimates fishermen could spend more than $350,000 in such an event.

In its 15th year, FLW Outdoors took off in 1992 after businessman Irwin L. Jacobs purchased a little known tournament organization in Kentucky and transformed it into one the largest bass tournament in the world. The circuit took its name from Ranger Boats founder Forrest L. Wood.

FLW's premier event is the Forrest Wood Cup with more than $2 million in prize money.

For more information on FLW Outdoors, visit www.flwoutdoors.com on the Web.

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



MOUNTAIN LAKES CVB | FOR THE JOURNAL

Daniel Atkins of Seneca holds up part of his winning catch during an FLW Outdoors bass tournament on Lake Keowee over the weekend.