

# Sanctuary Pointe visionary shares ideas at tourism summit

BY CARLOS GALARZA  
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CLEMSON — One of the visionaries behind the stalled Sanctuary Pointe project on Lake Hartwell is calling for a little flexibility from government regulations that could make a big difference in turning business-generating ideas into reality.

Robert Daffin expressed his views Wednesday during one of the morning Round Tables that discussed rural economies, tourism development and creating a more competitive business environment in South Carolina.

The discussion was part of the final day's events of the 2011 Heritage Development Summit that began Monday at Clemson

University's Madren Center.

Daffin is in the resort development business and one of the planners of the Sanctuary Pointe project near the Interstate 85 Welcome Center in Oconee County.

He told a room full of graduate students, tourism industry insiders, business owners and others about the challenges involved with getting a project off the ground.

"There is a window of opportunity to get it done and that window can close quickly," Daffin said.

Daffin said missing a window of opportunity often results in a project being delayed or killed to the detriment of business and jobs.

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The 2011 Heritage Development Summit continued at Clemson University's Madren Center Wednesday. Visitors and leaders from the state's heritage corridor attended a variety of sessions, discussing ways to be more sustainable and economically sound.

## SUMMIT: Common sense and flexibility go a long way

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A resort development expert who lives on Lake Keowee in Oconee, Daffin knows a thing or two about missed opportunities. In 2007, red tape and conflicting interests on the lake stifled his plans for the Keowee Town Landing development in northern Oconee County that was to be anchored by a Native American Interpretive and Educational Center.

Sanctuary Pointe, LLC is behind a proposed resort destination development of more than 300 acres on property leased by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to South Carolina Parks, Recreation and Tourism.

The project envisions hotels, a conference center, golf course, restaurants

and rental cabins. It has been in the planning stages since 2008. However, a weak economy and hurdles in the form of state and federal government regulations have kept the project at a standstill.

Daffin declined to speak about the project other than to say that the parties are still "working through the process."

He added that while regulations have their place, government over-regulation can stifle business opportunities at a time when jobs are at a premium.

Daffin echoed what others have stated at the summit — that common sense, flexibility and compromise go a long way to help public-private partnerships flourish.