Tourism spending up 4% in Oconee

THE JOURNAL STAFF

SENECA — Tourism expenditures for Oconee County reached an all-time high of $56.18 million in 2014, according to a report released recently by the S.C. Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department.

The report, which is completed annually by the U.S. Travel Association, shows tourism expenditures grew 4.21 percent from 2013 and that tourism directly supports 440 travel and tourism jobs in Oconee with a payroll more than $8.36 million.

Tourism is responsible for more than $6.38 million in local and state taxes collected, which reduces the local tax burden of every household by $165 annually.

Oconee ranks 20th among South Carolina counties and has experienced a 29 percent growth in tourism spending since 2006, which equals an additional $12.6 million annually being spent in our local economy today as compared to 2006.

County parks, recreation and tourism director Phil Shirley said tourism is a vital piece of economic development for the county.



Shirley

"Oconee County Council's adoption of the Destination Oconee Great Outdoors plan shows a continued commitment to our natural assets and tourism product development," he said. "By continuing to make tourism promotion and product development a priority, we not only grow tourism, we also continue to improve the overall quality of life for all of us."

Mountain Lakes Convention and Visitors Bureau president and CEO Ken Sloan said tourism is one of the leading industries both nationally and internationally.



Sloan

"It is my expectation that with the continued incredible community support of tourism, it will soon be the No. 1 industry in Oconee County," he said.

The full report "Economic Impact of Domestic Travel on South Carolina Counties 2014" is available at scprt.com under the "tourism statistics" heading.