West Union requesting $100K to fund welcome center

BY JESSICA SIBLEY
THE JOURNAL

WEST UNION — While Mayor Sharon Nunnery has been getting scads of positive feedback about a community park and welcome center on Highway 11, she's taking a crucial step tonight.

Nunnery's presentation to the Oconee County Council will contain a request for $100,000 in funding.

The money would be used to repair the windows and roof on the 1920s schoolhouse adjacent to the West Union Fire Department.

The green space in front of the building will be used for recreation, equipped with a gazebo, picnic tables and walking trails.

Because of the heavy rains, Nunnery said it is crucial to first fix the roof, since much of the wood inside of the schoolhouse is salvageable.

"The county is always talking about attracting more tourism to the area," she said. "A welcome center and park would bring in tourism and stimulate the economy. The plan is a good one all around."

Nunnery is hopeful that the county will have some accommodations tax (ATAX) funding available for the project.

"I've been speaking with Phil Shirley in the recreation department about our options," she added.

The ATAX is a quarterly tax that is often replenished.

In addition to special occasions like weddings, Nunnery said the refurbished building and the adjoining park area would draw in those passing through the county on Highway 11.

"One room would be dedicated to a welcome center, giving those interested all the information on local shops, restaurants and everything else the county has to offer," she said. "And also, West Union has never had a park like this before or received funds set aside for this sort of thing. I think it's long overdue, and I think it would be great for the entire county."

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West Union Mayor Sharon Nunnery is seeking $100,000 from Oconee County Council to [illegible] schoolhouse, which may be used as a Highway 11 welcome center.