What millage means to you

A 1-mill increase would cost $4 on a $100K home

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THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — Oconee residents seem set to dodge a tax increase this year, but The Journal looked into what raising the millage would have meant to property owners in the county.

Councilman Joel Thrift suggested at a meeting earlier this week that council discuss a potential 1- to 2-mill increase, but Thursday, three of the five members said they did not believe raising taxes was necessary this year.

FOR MORE

To see average millage values for different areas of Oconee County, turn to page **A7**.

But with concerns about the county continuing to eat into its reserve fund by more than $1.5 million over the past two years — including the current proposed budget — it is a possibility in the near future.



Nix

Auditor Ken Nix said a 1-mill increase would increase property taxes by $4 for each $100,000 of assessed value for a primary residence, or $6 per $100,000 of value for a second home or commercial operation.

In 2014, a $100,000 primary residence in an unincorporated area of Oconee would have cost the owner $419.60, so a 1-mill increase would make that figure $423.60, and a 2-mill increase would make it $427.60. Those figures would double for a $200,000 home, and so on.

Of course, those figures could change slightly depending on the value of each mill, but Nix said it

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MILLAGE: Oconee has state's fifth-lowest property taxes

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is too early to tell whether that would happen this year.

"I anticipate that the millage will increase some, but the key factor of the equation is where will Duke Energy fall," he said. "I will not know until mid-August."

According to data Nix provided from the S.C. Association of Counties, Oconee has the state's fifth-lowest property taxes — out of 46 counties — for a primary residence.

Aiken County property owners paid $291.20 on a legal residence valued at $100,000 in 2014, followed by Horry ($322.80), Beaufort ($354.28), Greenwood ($419.20) and then Oconee ($419.60). Pickens County ranked No. 11 at $493.60.

Oconee had the state's 13th most valuable mill at $506,616, while Pickens was 15th at $461,980. The state's most value mill is in Charleston County at nearly $3 million.

Nix provided an "apples to apples" millage that showed Oconee ranked as the state's 10th-best net millage, which compares a county's wealth to the amount that its citizens pay for services.

"In my job, I do base the value of a mill as wealth," he said, "and yes we have a strong economy that has been steadily on the increase for the past few years. I have been here six years, and the millage rate is still under what it was in 2008, which was 216.7."

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2014 millage for legal residence only

Value	County	Salem	Seneca	Walhalla	Westminster	West Union	Keowee Key
$100K	$419.60	$553.60	$629.20	$744	$797.20	$592	$477.60

SOURCE: OCONEE COUNTY AUDITOR'S OFFICE