Work begins on new spec building

$1.4 million project to be completed by February

BY CARLOS GALARZA
THE JOURNAL

WESTMINSTER — Work on building Oconee County's new $1.4 million spec building is underway.

Economic Development Director Jim Alexander said construction of the foundation would start next week, weather permitting. He said structural steel for the project would be arriving a week later.

Despite two days of rain that stalled land clearing this week, project completion is expected by February, Alexander said.

County officials are not waiting for the spec building to be completed to start promoting it.

County officials are not waiting for the spec building to be completed to start promoting it.

Alexander said the South Carolina Power Team, which is the economic development alliance of the 20 state-owned electric cooperatives, already is planning to market the new spec building.

"The Power team will do an e-mail blast," Alexander said.

Roebuck Building Co. of Spartanburg is doing the project.

Oconee and Roebuck signed a final contract last month that calls for a guaranteed maximum price of $1,470,500. Roebuck's fee would be 4 percent of the total cost of construction.

Oconee's direct investment is less because several utility companies are donating their state utility tax credits to the project, which pays almost half of the total cost.

Spec Building II includes a detention pond that serves a 19.2-acre industrial site at the Highway 11 Commerce Center near Westminster.

Most economic development experts

SPEC BUILDING: To be completed by February

FROM PAGE A1

agree that products such as spec buildings and shovel-ready industrial sites are needed to catch the attention of businesses looking to relocate or expand operations in an area.

Oconee's first foray into investing taxpayers' money in a shell building in 2004 was the target of harsh criticism because it sat empty for nearly two years.

The county eventually recouped its direct investment of more than $700,000 in Spec Building I.

Lift Technologies Inc. took over Spec Building I, invested more than $7 million to expand the building and added more jobs at the plant.

The new 50,000-square-foot building could be expanded to 150,000 square feet.

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



CARLOS GALARZA | THE JOURNAL

Land-clearing vehicles sit behind a sign promoting Oconee County's new spec building at the Highway 11 Commerce Center near Westminster on Thursday.