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Construction set to begin next month at retail development

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SENECA — Construction is slated to begin next month on a highly anticipated retail development in Oconee County along the U.S. Highway 123 corridor near Clemson.

Casto Southeast Realty executive vice president Shannon Dixon told The Journal this week that construction at the site would start in May, with “more news to come in the next 30 days” about tenants coming to Hartwell Village.

Five Below, Michaels, Rack Room Shoes and Petco were recently added to the list of tenants at the planned 300,000-square-foot retail and restaurant development adjacent to NewSpring Church’s Clemson campus.

The four retailers are in addition to previously reported tenants Marshalls and Ulta Beauty, while a Tru by Hilton hotel has also been added to the development’s site plan.

A theater that was part of the development’s initial site plan has been replaced by a future resort in the latest update, which is dated March 17. The first phase of the development is scheduled to open in 2018, according to Casto’s website.

In late 2013, NewSpring Church bought a roughly 60-acre tract at the location from the DeFore Milliken plant for about \$5 million and flipped roughly 42 acres of the property to Casto

for more than \$6 million.

Hartwell Village will be the first large-scale development in Oconee to incorporate the county’s desired “rustic elegance” design attributes.

While other buildings in the county feature the stacked stone and open-beam look that defines the style, Casto was incentivized by the county to utilize “rustic elegance” in exchange for infrastructure assistance.

The shopping center will be part of a facelift that area of the county appears set to receive in the near future.

County council also advanced an ordinance last week to offer tax incentives to a \$60 million student housing development — dubbed Project Entry — that would be located on the peninsula near the train trestle that crosses Lake Hartwell from Oconee County into Clemson.

County Councilman Paul Cain has said the growth in that area of the county will help create a “diverse population” and said it was important for Oconee “to be welcoming to people who are going to bring ideas and investment to this community.”

“We’re fortunate that Clemson is out of sewer capacity, in my opinion,” he said, “and we should be welcoming young folks to our community — and the investment that developers provide. That’s economic development.”

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