

Gateway signs more than halfway done

BY JUSTIN LEE CAMPBELL
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — Destination Oconee strategy manager Janet Hartman expects two Oconee County gateway signs to be completed “by the end of next week.”

Hartman told the Destination Oconee Action Committee this week that signs on S.C. Highway 11 and U.S. 123 at the Pickens County border will

be done soon “if all goes according to schedule.”

“I really hope by the time we have our next meeting, this will be the last time it will be old business because it will be done,” Hartman said at a committee meeting on Tuesday. “Our gateway signage is I’d say 50 percent, but in fact it’s even a little bit further than that. The pillars are up. The wood beams are on.”

The sign on S.C. 11 needs sealing, placement of the sign and landscaping. The U.S. 123 sign needs a roof and sealing before the sign goes up.

“We do have a landscape plan that we’re looking at for Highway 123,” Hartman said.

The Journal reported in February that Hartman joined contractors at both sites to evaluate the spots after the South

Carolina Department of Transportation granted the permits. The signs are modified versions of the design that the Destination Oconee plans proposed.

The plans recommended funding the signs with grants.

“Both of those were paid for with grant funds and some remaining balance

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by the Oconee Economic Alliance,” Hartman told committee members.

Hartman plans to hold a celebration or ribbon-cutting ceremony once the projects are completed.

“I think it will be very well received as we’ve talked about it,” Hartman said.

The Destination Oconee final plan listed signage as part of an effort to grow Oconee County. The plan called for gateway signage at major thoroughfares with a “rustic elegance” design.

“Conduct a condition assessment of the public access, structures and sig-

nage at lakes, waterfalls, rivers, scenic vistas and other key attractions,” the plan said. “Develop a plan for improving public access and experiences.”

Hartman is happy the two projects will be completed but told the committee they’re only the beginning.

“So that is two of approximately 10 entries into Oconee County, so that’s the start,” Hartman said. “Not the finish.”

The sign on U.S. 123 was bid out at roughly \$43,000, while the sign on S.C. 11

was bid at about \$33,000.

JF Contractors of Sumter won the bid at \$76,000 over Rite Lite Signs Inc. of Concord, N.C., which bid \$147,000.

The South Carolina National Heritage Corridor and S. C. Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism each provided grants in the amount of \$37,000, for a total of \$74,000. The OEA is providing \$2,201 for the remaining balance.

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New gateway signage at Oconee County's borders with Pickens County on U.S. Highway 123 and S.C. Highway 11 should be complete by next week, according to Destination Oconee strategy manager Janet Hartman.