

Local museums expand hours

THE JOURNAL STAFF

SENECA — Thanks to Oconee County Parks, Recreation and Tourism and funding from the Oconee County Accommodations Tax, local museums have expanded visiting hours to better serve the public.

The Museum of the Cherokee in South Carolina, Patriot's Hall, Oconee Veterans Museum and the Oconee Heritage Center General Store museum in Westminster will now be open to visitors three days per week.

"We are really excited to see these great museums open more often to visitors," Oconee Heritage Center director/curator Leslie White said. "Many of these museums were previously open limited hours only on Saturdays, and many visitors were unable to see the great exhibits at these museums."

Phil Shirley of Oconee County PRT said the department is excited to help the museum docent program to increase the hours tourism and cultural partners are open to visitors.

"We are hopeful that with the additional hours and marketing efforts we can enhance awareness and bring more people to the museums," he said.

"We have some amazing resources and want to help showcase what these museums have to offer."

White said there's lots of evidence that visitors who participate in culture and

heritage tourism, such as visiting museums and historic sites, spend more and stay longer than average at their destinations.

"Local governments who invest in culture and heritage assets tend to see a significant return on their investment via both direct and indirect visitor spending in local economies," she said. "Oconee has a wealth of museums, historic sites and cul-

tural assets that can be an attractive package to potential visitors."

The Museum of the Cherokee in South Carolina and Oconee Heritage Center General Store Museum will be open Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Patriot's Hall will be open Thursdays and Fridays from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. and Saturdays 10 a.m.-4 p.m.