

Major expansion would make for banner year in Oconee

Project Maxwell would put 2017 tally over \$150M

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SENECA — A \$76.8 million expansion by an existing Oconee company would push the county to new heights for capital investment in a calendar year, according to the county's top economic development official.

Oconee Economic Alliance executive director Richard Blackwell told his board of directors recently that the completion of the expansion, dubbed Project Maxwell, would make 2017 the "best year in the history of the county ever" in terms of capital investment.



The project's official announcement is expected in the next two to three months. "When it announces, it will be the largest capital investment outside of Duke Energy in the history of the county, so we're excited about that one," he said.

An amended and restated fee-in-lieu-of-tax agreement between the county and the company passed first reading at a July county council meeting.

The company intends to invest \$76.8 million aligned with the project and will create 163 new jobs, according to the agenda item summary from that meeting, though the ordinance only stipulates the company must invest a minimum of \$60 million in taxable investment in the county within a 10-year period.

The ordinance would also put into place a special source revenue credit for the company, which Blackwell told his board in January was an existing Oconee-based company.

When finalized by council and

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announced by the S.C. Department of Commerce, the project would build on the alliance's existing successes this calendar year: Schneider Electric announced a \$7.3 million expansion and 56 new jobs at its Seneca facility, Itron announced a \$10 million capital investment and 100 new jobs in West Union, Jantzen announced a \$4 million expansion and 16 jobs in Seneca, and Clemson EPOCH announced a \$60 million mixed-use/student housing development that will create 30 new jobs.

That brings the county to \$81.3 million in capital investment already in 2017, with Project Maxwell's promised investment poised to boost that tally to \$158.1 million, which would top last year's total of nearly \$90 million.

Blackwell also counted two manufacturing projects, Nacan/PVS Sensors and Sharpe Manufacturing, among the successes for 2017, though the capital investments associated with those projects are still to be determined.

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