

Oconee County property tax receipts up

BY NORM CANNADA
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WALHALLA — Oconee County property tax collections are up a little more than \$2.6 million over a year ago — most of it thanks to the county's biggest taxpayer.

Numbers provided by the Oconee County treasurer's office Monday showed that a total of \$92,868,743.25 had been paid in property taxes through

Jan. 19 for the 2017 tax year, excluding taxes paid for the five municipalities.



Nowell

That figure was up about \$2.6 million over the same date a year ago, according to treasurer Greg Nowell's office. The number does not include vehicle taxes, Nowell said.

Duke Energy, the county's largest taxpayer, paid its tax

bill of \$33,310,325.18 last week, a \$2.565 million increase over its bill a year ago — all but about \$35,000 of the total increase in receipts for the county.

Nowell credited Duke's tax bill with the increase, not the county's 2017 reassessment of property.

"Reassessment is supposed to be revenue neutral, but Duke Power is our biggest taxpayer,

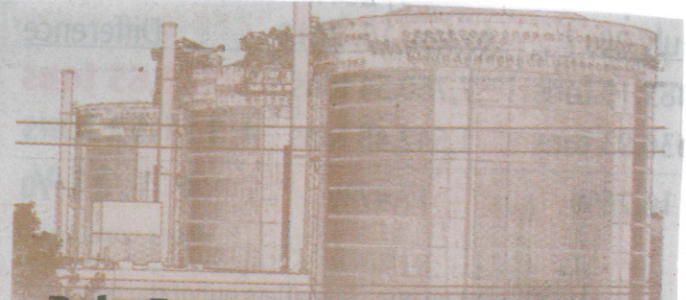
over last year

SEE RECEIPTS, PAGE A5

Oconee property tax receipts as of Jan. 19 (excluding municipalities)

| Year | Total receipts | Notices billed | Bills paid |
|------|-----------------|----------------|------------|
| 2017 | \$92,868,743.25 | 74,871 | 61,542 |
| 2016 | \$90,267,234.08 | 73,702 | 61,142 |
| 2015 | \$88,212,616.08 | 75,848 | 61,874 |

SOURCE: OCONEE COUNTY



Duke Energy property taxes paid

| | |
|------|-----------------|
| 2017 | \$33,310,325.18 |
| 2016 | \$30,744,461.03 |
| 2015 | \$30,020,641.08 |

SOURCE: OCONEE COUNTY

RECEIPTS: Up \$2.6M

FROM PAGE A1

and theirs went up nearly \$3 million," Nowell said. "That's the only reason we're up."

Total tax bills paid by Jan. 19 were also up for the 2017 tax year. A total of 61,542 of the 74,871 bills sent out were paid by Friday, or 82.2 percent of the total bills. Figures on the same date for the 2016 tax year showed 61,142 bills were paid on the same date out of a total of 73,702 bills sent out, or 82.9 percent.

Property tax receipts for all municipalities increased by a little more than \$103,000, from \$2.623 million on Jan. 19 of last year to \$2.726 million on the same date this year.

Nowell said the increase in municipal taxes is due to growth in

Economic Alliance executive director) Richard Blackwell, economic development and all the stuff that's moving in here," Nowell said.

With last week's Jan. 16 deadline passed, Nowell said a 3 percent late fee now applies through the end of January for those who did not make the deadline for paying the taxes. That penalty goes up to 10 percent Feb. 2. On March 15, Nowell will declare remaining outstanding tax bills delinquent and turn them over to the delinquent tax collector. If the bills are not paid by September, those properties can be sold at auction in November.

"People who are going to pay on time, they pay every year on time," Nowell said. "The people who are delinquent are delinquent."

Property tax receipts for all Oconee municipalities as of Jan. 19

| Year | Total receipts | Tax notices paid |
|------|----------------|------------------|
| 2017 | \$2,726,651.19 | 8,294 |
| 2016 | \$2,623,575.59 | 8,208 |
| 2015 | \$2,458,757.73 | 8,263 |

SOURCE: OCONEE COUNTY