

# Oconee Economic Alliance starting new networking group for young professionals

BY RILEY MORNINGSTAR  
THE JOURNAL

WESTMINSTER — The Oconee Economic Alliance announced a networking group for a younger demographic during its recent board of directors meeting at the Tri-County Technical College Oconee campus.

Called "Surge," the professional networking organization is targeting members from the ages

of 23 to 39 who want to network professionally.

"We are starting the initiative, and it is fully an Oconee countywide

thing," OEA graphic designer Morgan Holcomb said. "We will own it, but the whole idea about it is that we want it to run itself. It's something easy and simple. We do want the leadership to run itself, and we'll just be the liaison of getting contacts together of planning things and setting things up."

Talent attraction and retention is a focal point for 2019, and interim executive director Janet Hartman believes the networking group can provide a crucial ele-

ment of that goal.

"Surge is the formal program that will help us with this target," she said.

"It puts structure to an idea, and it's important for us to attract talent here. Right now, the largest demographic of workforce is the millennial. We see it to be very

important for us to form some sort of structure around the program so when people come in and want a professional network to be involved in, we'll have something for them."

No membership cost has been determined.

"We're just excited," Holcomb said. "I like to think about the future of things, and we've had this same group of people that have known each other and grown with each other in this community, and now most are county council members and leaders, and we need to have a successful young professionals group because we need to build them up for that. That's going to be the future of Oconee County, and we need to do it the right way."

Hartman said the organization is important

for the age range Surge is pinpointing.

"It's proven that people who are involved and

engaged will

stay,"

she said. "We need

the attraction

**SURGE**  
pull up a chair.

to get them here and the retention for them to stay. We want to have something for those people."

## WEBSITE OVERHAUL COMING FOR OEA

The alliance's website is getting a makeover.

OEA identified three vendors for the project, ultimately hiring the firm Redhype.

"We've had the current

website for five years, and it's really stood the test of time," Hartman said. "It's still a great-looking website, but as technology has changed new programs have come into play, and we want to take advantage of the most recent technology and create a website that's very engaging and easy to find information. We have a great amount of information on our website now, and that's fine, but we need to fine-tune it to make sure the most important stuff is found."

She said the project will be a 12-to-14-week process, and then the investo-coneesc.com site will go live under its new look.

rmorningstar@upstatetoday.com | (864) 973-6685



Holcomb