

Hartman provides board with updates on economic projects

BY RILEY MORNINGSTAR
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — The interim executive director of the Oconee Economic Alliance recently updated the organization's board of directors on the status of several economic projects in the county.

Director Janet Hartman told the board two particular projects could make decisions to expand or come to Oconee County in the near future.

PROJECT CYLINDER

Hartman said the most immediate decision could come within the next 60 days from an "existing Oconee-based firm" looking to grow its current location.

"That project is going to happen, and they're partnering with a national company to bring in a new product line, and we just haven't gotten the specifics from them," she said. "That will be a significant investment on their part. We potentially might have an update at the next board meeting (September) or at the November meeting."

PROJECT ANVIL

Hartman announced Project Anvil had been added to the project list and called the news "exciting."

The potential client is a European manufacturer of structural components for the automotive industry.

"The request for information came in June, and it was a site consultant we thought was just out there looking for more information and we might not hear back," Hartman said. "Surprisingly, we heard back from them fairly quick, and they had

a site visit here (at Oconee Industry and Technology Park). That happened in July, and just this week



Hartman

they asked us for additional information. It sounds like they're pretty interested, and we're the only county in South Carolina they're looking at. However, there are probably four other states they're looking at. I'm not getting too optimistic, but it's nice to see it move quickly."

Hartman said the group is expected to make a site decision by the end of the summer.

PROJECT CHI

Hartman said she had a positive conversation with a company looking at setting up shop in the Seneca Rail Site. The company needs rail for the expansion of its operations, according to the meeting's agenda material.

"We had conversation with them in late July, and we've been talking with this company for a while," she said. "I'm really hoping the Seneca Rail improvements — the road project, the infrastruc-

ture — is going to help push them to the decision line. Right now, I don't have a final answer from them. I hope to follow up with them in the next little while."

PROJECT CELL

Hartman is hopeful a metal stamping manufacturer from the Midwest will visit the Oconee Industry and Technology Park next month.

"I think their last visit was probably eight, nine months ago," Hartman said. "Hopefully they'll be back in September to look at the site again, and they're also looking at OITP."

PROJECT BLOSSOM ONE

This month, Hartman said Project Blossom One had been moved into the inactive project status. The Scottish textile company creates products for the air filtration market.

"This is the group we've been talking to a couple years from Scotland, and they had talked about wanting to expand into the U.S.," Hartman said. "Right now, they've gone kind of quiet. We still have one of our investors who has relations with them in golf, and when th

Scottish Open came up they had some conversations, but it appears right now they're not going to make any moves. I'm going to put that one in the inactive and on hold for now, and if it comes back, we'll move it in."

PROJECT FLOW AND PROJECT HAMMER

Hartman said both Project Flow and Project Hammer have been moved into the cold status, meaning there has been little movement of late.

"Both of those happen to be existing industries here in Oconee County, and people have just experienced a little bit of a slowdown, and they've decided to put both of those projects on hold right now," Hartman said. "We'll continue to follow up with these folks, but for the project purpose, we're going to move those to hold right now."

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