

Powering through

Construction numbers growing in Oconee despite pandemic

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THE JOURNAL

SENECA — There's an economic slowdown taking jobs and peace of mind, but it looks like someone forgot to tell the construction companies working in the Golden Corner.

As of mid-May, Oconee County has already had more residential building permits issued this year than it did in all of 2019, surpassing past the 144 permits by 35. Commercial permits are at nearly 80 percent of their 2019 total, but have tripled in value.

A lot of that commercial value lies in the Hartwell Village student housing complex on Oconee's eastern end, but there are several single-family developments that are working as well.

"We have two major subdivisions and multiple other smaller — under 10 lots — subdivisions going," Oconee County planning director Adam Chapman said. "There seems to be, at this point, very little slowdown or change of course since the pre-corona times."

The homes behind 179 residential building permits had total value of \$21.6 million as of May 12, and surveys for close to 50 units have come

OCONEE BUILDING PERMITS

	2020		2019		2018		2017	
	Permits	Value	Permits	Value	Permits	Value	Permits	Value
Commercial	45	\$31.3M	57	\$9.6M	54	\$30.1M	59	\$6.7M
Residential	179	\$21.6M	144	\$22.8M	210	\$31.6M	262	\$26M



While the Hartwell Village student housing project is the most visible bit of construction in Oconee County right now, building permits are on track to surpass last year's numbers by a long shot.

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through the planning office in the past three weeks, Chapman said.

About half of the houses are lake homes, he said, and the other half further from the water

on former farmlands.

"Other than the student housing complex in Hartwell Village that's already on the books, they're all single-family homes, not multi-family," Chapman said. "There's a lot of construction

going on, and the most visible one is the student housing in Hartwell Village."

While the county waived permit fees for tornado-related damage, Oconee County has seen more than \$43,000 in fees

for the 360 permits issued since April 13.

More than \$516,000 in permit fees — including electric work, tearing down outbuildings and relocating mobile homes — has been paid since Jan. 1.