

Salem officials 'ecstatic' to land \$216K state loan

BY RILEY MORNINGSTAR
THE JOURNAL

SALEM — After years of planning and disappointing funding denials, Salem has landed a state loan to begin its long-awaited water line extension project.

On Wednesday, Salem director of operations Ryan Hardin told The Journal the town was selected to receive \$216,000 in funding from the State Revolving Fund Program, which is under the jurisdiction

SEE SALEM, PAGE A5

SALEM: Work could begin in fall on \$640K water line project

FROM PAGE A1

of the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control, the S.C. Rural Infrastructure Authority and the Office of Local Government. Hardin said the project qualified for principal loan forgiveness and the town will not be required to repay the loan due to the program essentially being an extension of federal grant dollars.

"We were ecstatic to be chosen. I think we're ranked fourth in the state of approved applicants," Hardin said.

Funding will go to building and installing a booster pump station in the Shallow Ford Road area, which will allow the town to increase the source water capacity to the northern portion of its system by more than 250 percent. The Easley-based engineering firm Beeson-Rosier Group will handle the loan procedures and engineering for the project.

Construction of the Fall Creek Source Water Station will cost \$640,992.40, according to information

provided to The Journal. Officials believe the station will trigger future growth along the S.C. Highway 11 corridor.

Hardin said bid procurement is expected to begin in July, with construction to begin within 90 days of the bid award, which will likely come this fall. Hardin added the procurement could even be ready before July.

Salem has already designated \$215,922.40 in cash for the project and will need a slight change in funding from Oconee County Council to be approved.

Hardin will speak at the county council meeting Tuesday to ask officials to change a previous earmarking of \$209,000 from grant matching funds to undesignated funds for the project. Should the county release the money, the project would be entirely funded.

Hardin credited county grants coordinator Madeline Compton and county administrator Amanda Brock for helping the town in the loan application process.

"If it were not for

Madeline Compton and Amanda Brock, we would not have this good news to share," he said. "They were paramount to this moving forward."

Compton said she enjoyed working with Hardin and Salem officials in securing funding on the project.

"They were very willing to provide the needed information for applications and prompt with their responses," she said in a statement to The Journal. "The passion they have to make these improvements for the community really shines through."

The remainder of the project includes two other phases that will involve a pipeline extension of 2.3 miles and cost approximately \$1.2 million. The project has been discussed for nearly 20 years. The second phase would install more than 1,000 linear feet of water main across S.C. Highway 11. The installation of a water line along S.C. Highway 11 would come in Phase 3, adding 12,100 feet of water main, according to documents provided to The Journal.