

**RESOLUTION OF THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND TOURISM
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF OCONEE COUNTY, GA**

WHEREAS at the Oconee County Cultural Affairs and Tourism (CAT) Committee meeting held on January 14, 2010 at which 7 out of 7 committee members were present, as well as Rusty Haygood, Economic Development Director and Peggy Holcomb, Tourism Director, the following recommendation was approved by a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed; and

WHEREAS the Oconee County Board of Commissioners created the CAT Committee in order to advise the Commissioners on issues involving Cultural Affairs and Tourism within the county; and

WHEREAS on July 3, 2007, Oconee County passed a Hotel-Motel Sales Tax (the tax) of 6% with expenditure of such funds to be used in compliance with O.C.G.A. § 48-13-51; and

WHEREAS the tax began to be collected on July 1, 2009 and during the first 5 months of collection approximately \$23,000.00 has been received by Oconee County; and

WHEREAS on August 18, 2009 at a duly called committee meeting, the then sitting and present members of the CAT Committee, as well as all the incumbent members, were requested by Commission Chairman Melvin Davis to research and provide a recommendation to the County Board of Commissioners on the appropriate expenditure of such Hotel-Motel Tax Revenues; and

WHEREAS on October 1, 2009 this Committee was reconvened with numerous new members; and

WHEREAS the members of this committee have met individually and collectively with leaders of the community, on numerous occasions, to formulate the following recommendation to the Board of Commissioners. Minutes of the committee meetings involving discussion of this issue have been submitted to the members of the Board of Commissioners for their review.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Cultural Affairs and Tourism (CAT) Committee recommends that the Oconee County Board of Commissioners recognize that the marketing efforts relating to tourism within Oconee County should be the responsibility of the Tourism Department, with guidance from the CAT Committee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that expenditures of revenues and interest from the Hotel-Motel Sales Tax (the Tax) collections shall initially be spent on the following projects.

These "short term" projects are the four key initiatives identified as being most apt to immediately drive additional tourism into Oconee County thereby aiding in diversification of the tax base. They are presented in priority order, with a request that immediate attention be given to the first priority.

1. Restore the Tourism Assistant position for the Welcome Center/Tourism Department. The attached job description for this position has been reviewed by Rusty Haygood and Peggy Holcomb and includes talents needed in order to support the other initiatives set forth below.
2. Contract for a Professional Web Design. Create a requirement document, utilizing county resources, for the development of a professional event/tourist based web design and finance the implementation of the chosen proposal.
3. Relocate the Welcome Center. The current location of our welcome center defies easy access for tourists and residents. We recommend researching other, more visible and hospitable locations that would best provide a true welcome to our county and her offerings.
4. Increase signage of those areas of interest to tourists that currently exist in Oconee County. Providing consistent, distinct, yet interchangeable, signage throughout the County, in keeping with the unique branding of Oconee, would reinforce the cohesive marketing plan we intend to present in our efforts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the CAT Committee has identified the following topics as our recommendations for longer-range study by the appropriate departments and/or committees. These have not yet been prioritized.

- Promote Cultural-Heritage-Ago-Tourism within Oconee County with particular focus on the development of facilities at Heritage Park.
- Support the Recreational Affairs Citizens Advisory Committee in aspects of the Master Park Plan that include enhanced recreational facilities capable of hosting regional tournaments.
- Promote the offerings of the various art communities of Oconee County.
- Complete a case study to investigate the feasibility of a conference center in Oconee County.

The above Resolution was adopted by the Cultural Affairs and Tourism Committee on the 14th day of January as set forth above and is hereby presented to the Oconee County Board of Commissioners for appropriate action this 26th day of January, 2010.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elizabeth J. Hovell,
Secretary, CAT Committee