



Big Infrastructure Projects on the Horizon for Oconee County

Oconee County is a great place to be! Our current multi-year Strategic Plan emphasizes the goals of smart government, smart growth, smart infrastructure, and excellent quality of life. These four goals drive all of the projects that the Oconee County Board of Commissioners pursues for our community.

Through our focus on smart government, we strive to provide services with efficiency, effectiveness, citizen engagement and transparency. Our website is available 24/7 for residents to find information, register for Parks and Recreation programs, make payments or report a concern.

Residents can subscribe to receive relevant notifications from the website via text or email. To facilitate increased communication with residents, businesses and visitors, we have created a variety of social media channels so that individuals can easily and conveniently keep up with county news and events.

With smart infrastructure as a goal, we are committed to developing strategic infrastructure improvements that will meet our county's needs now and in the future. We have made accessibility to high-speed internet for residents and businesses in our community a priority, and we are currently exploring construction of a fiber backbone and partnership with an internet service provider to bring high-speed internet to the county. Our ultimate goal is to ensure that every single home in Oconee County has access to internet service.

We have just broken ground on a 9,000-square-foot expansion of the Oconee County Courthouse, which will allow for increased security and capacity in our courts. This project is part of our long-term focus on master planning for our county buildings and facilities. We have also made a new administrative building a goal, so that we can unite all of our administrative offices in one location in order to increase efficiency and communication.

With our commitment to smart growth, we are striving to ensure that new growth fits in with the citizens' vision of Oconee County. To that end, we are working on revising our Unified Development Code to ensure that it matches up with our county's Comprehensive Plan, which guides our decisions

about land use, and which was developed and revised with input from the community. Citizens have indicated how they want Oconee County to develop, and these changes to regulations will help ensure we meet these goals. We have also taken a big-picture view of economic development and tourism efforts, completely restructuring these departments to provide greater oversight and collaboration, as well as to develop strategies that work with this vision for Oconee County.

With every project we embark upon, we keep one goal in mind: to maintain the outstanding quality of life we enjoy in Oconee County. Last year, we added three new multipurpose fields to Oconee Veterans Park. Other plans that are in the works include the expansion of the Senior Center facility and the renovation of the Animal Services building.

We are especially excited about long-term plans to decommission the Rocky Branch LAS wastewater plant and create a new park and recreational activity space for the county on that land. This move will take an aged sewer plant offline, gain efficiencies in sewer treatment processes and reclaim over 230 acres of prime park space that will provide recreation opportunities for the community for generations.

As always, we want to hear from you. Your input is vital to Oconee County.

County Talk Columns are submitted to the Oconee Enterprise and appear in the print edition on the date listed.