



DIRECTORS REPORT

MARCH 2012

- March 01: Office visit with former Oconee County Plant Manager.
Meeting with SDOC Coordinator for Business and Industry.
Attended Workforce Development Steering Committee meeting at TCTC.
- March 02: Participated in WorkLink Executive Committee/BOD Meeting at Pendleton office.
- March 4-5: Attended the SC Rural Summit, Greenwood, SC. Oconee County along with Anderson and Pickens Counties received the Rural Summit Education Award for the Business & Industry Showcase, "Educational Initiative." Todd Bennington, VP of Operations, BorgWarner was featured program speaker regarding Showcase and Workforce Development.
- March 06: Attended the County Council meeting. Agenda: First Reading on Project Sunshine PILOT.
- March 07: Participated in Agriculture & Business Committee meeting at Westminster Library.
Attended WorkLink RFP Review Committee meeting.
- March 08: Attended Oconee Alliance monthly meeting.
Participated in the Oconee Alliance Board of Directors meeting.
Meeting at the office with business/land developer from out of state.
Hosted representatives from the South Carolina Power Team and Santee Cooper on county visit of the shell building, industrial parks and buildings and sites and a review of EDC economic development programs.
- March 09: Attended the Oconee County Industrial Group (OCIG) monthly meeting hosted by Oconee Medical Center.
- March 12: Office visit with newly hired EDC Director.
Attended Mountain Lakes Business Development Corp. monthly Board meeting.
Meeting with County Administrator.
Pre-meeting planning session with EDC Chairman.
- March 13: Attended the 2012 TDL Summit (Transportation, Distribution, Logistics), Columbia, SC.
County Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting, observed staff presentation and made additional comments.
- March 14: Attended the Upstate SC Alliance Annual Meeting held at BMW, Greer, SC.
Project & Marketing Manager attended the SC Bankers Economic Development Conference.
- March 15: Attended the Education Foundation of Oconee County monthly Board meeting.
Hosted OCIG retirement dinner for Dan Robbins, Special Projects Mgr., Borg Warner.



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- March 16 Economic Development Commission meeting.
Attended 4th Annual State of Oconee Luncheon. EDC was major sponsor for event.
- March 19 Meeting with representative of Gordon Investments, Inc. regarding industrial buildings.
- March 20 Attended Business-Education Partnership monthly meeting at SDOC.
Visited new facility of the Oconee Alliance.
Prepared shell building for client meeting.
Attended County Council meeting. Agenda: Hal Johnson, CEO, Upstate SC Alliance presented annual report to Council. Agenda: Second Reading of PILOT for Project Sunshine. Also attending: EDC members Hank Field and Sammy Dickson and Staff member, Theima Miller.
- March 21 Meeting with management team for Project Move.
- March 21-23 Attended the South Carolina Power Team-Economic Development Review 2012.
- March 27 Visited the Walgreen Distribution Center and Clemson University Outdoor Lab facility.
- March 28 Made presentation to the Capital Projects Commission. Reference-Echo Hills, Phase I development.
Meeting with owner/manager of existing industry.
Project and Marketing Manager attended the Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative Annual Community and Industry meeting.
- March 29 Transition of office to upper level in preparation for newly hired Director.
- March 30 Attended the Tri-County Technical College Energy Summit planning meeting.
Distribution of the EDC News (newsletter), Volume I, 2012.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jim".

James W. Alexander
Director

Blackwell is eager to tell Oconee's story

CARLOS GALARZA
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — The keys to Oconee County's economic development engine are in the hands of a young man who looks as if he'd feel comfortable behind the wheel of a hot rod.

Richard Blackwell looks younger than his 32 years. The signature bowtie that has become part of his attire only accentuates his boyish looks.

Blackwell is two weeks into his new job as econom-

ic development director. He replaces Jim Alexander who stepped down from the position, as he transitions into retirement in the next two months.

Of the dozens of applicants that made a pitch for Alexander's job, Blackwell's credentials stood out from the crowd.

Relying his young age, Blackwell comes with

broad and relevant experience. For the past five years he has been the No. 2 man at the Upstate Alliance — the chief promoter of economic development in the region.

Prior to that, Blackwell put his Master's degree in Public Administration from the University of South Carolina to work in Greer by promoting local economic development.

While pursuing a Bachelor's degree in political science at USC, Blackwell got his feet wet in state politics

by working approximately 18 months for Gov. Jim Hodges in 2000 and 2001.

Blackwell doesn't lack confidence. He describes himself as being "very aggressive" and as someone who doesn't think "anyone will outwork me."

Still, there is nothing brash about Blackwell. He's been married to his wife, Allison, for almost seven years. She grew up in Clemson and knows Oconee very well.

The couple has a 15-month-old daughter.

"We've got one set of grandparents in Clemson, and my family is still in Greenville, so we've got family in the area," Blackwell said. "We're ready to get over here and just get familiar with the community and everything Oconee has to offer."

Blackwell expects to put all his professional experience into "telling Oconee's story" to potential clients. He said the county has the assets to attract attention.

"It's a great story to tell," he said. "There're a lot of

great things here in Oconee — a great work force, a great existing industry base, one of the best shell buildings in the entire state of South Carolina, two industrial parks coming on line, great quality of life, the mountains are in the backyard, the lakes are right there on the front door, the school district is great — so it's a great story to tell. I'm the one that gets to work on the team that gets to tell that story."

PHOTO BY CARLOS GALARZA

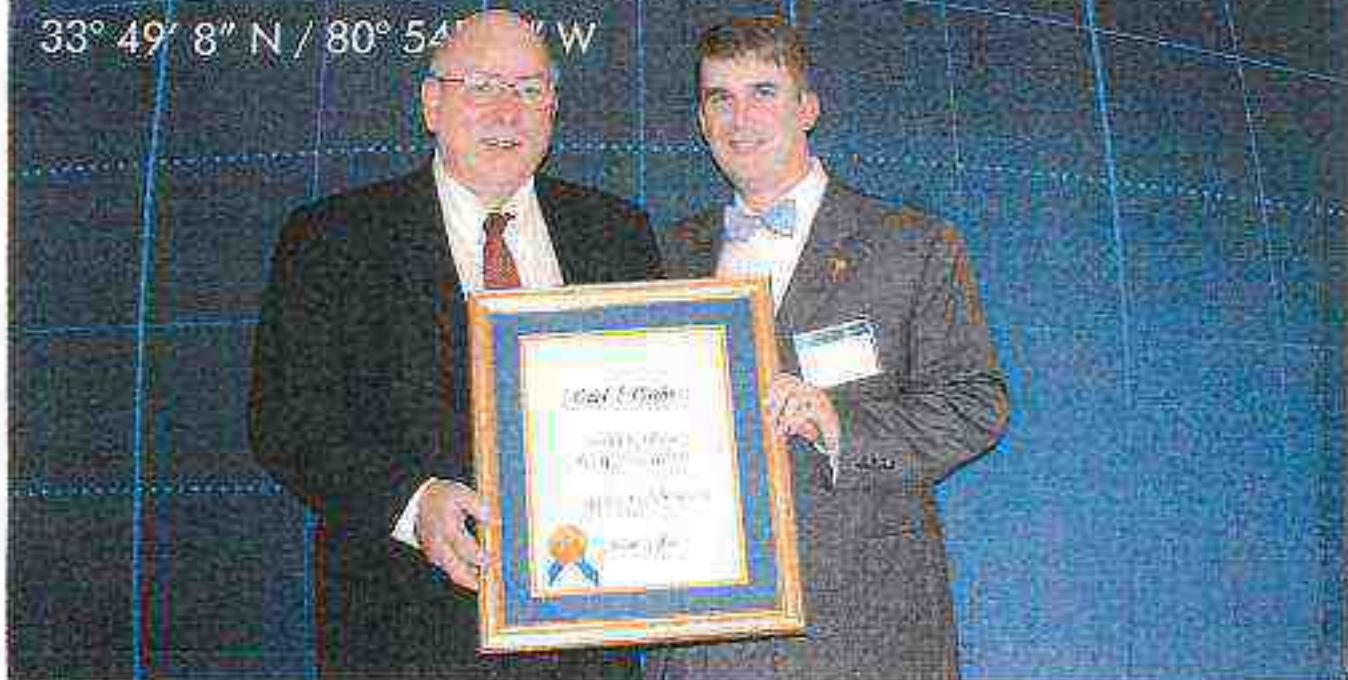


Blackwell

SOUTH CAROLINA

state of business. world of opportunity.

33° 49' 8" N / 80° 54' 1" W



Carl Cliche, Chairman, Mountain Lakes Business Development Corporation named Oconee County's SC Ambassador for Economic Development

Richard Blackwell, Executive Director, Oconee County Economic Development Commission is pictured presenting the Ambassador Award to Mr. Cliche. He commented, "This event is a great opportunity to say "Thank you" for the many contributions in assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs and for the jobs created in the county and surrounding communities."

Gov. Nikki Haley and the South Carolina Department of Commerce honored economic development leaders from all 46 counties on April 17th at an awards ceremony held at the Statehouse during Industry Appreciation Week.

In most communities across the state, small businesses continue to play an important role in job creation. Small businesses employ 750,147 South Carolinians, or about 49 percent of all people employed by private industry in the state. Small business also makes up a large proportion of the manufacturers in the state. More than 3,200 manufacturers are considered small businesses, which represent more than 88 percent of all manufacturers in the state, and those firms employ 70,000 state residents.

BorgWarner investing \$25 million, creating 50 new jobs

By Ray Chandler

Originally published: 10:11 a.m., April 4, 2012

Updated: 10:11 a.m., April 4, 2012

WALHALLA — New jobs will be heading to Oconee County on the heels of \$25 million in new investment by BorgWarner at its Seneca plant.

The Oconee County Council on Tuesday gave final approval to a 20-year fee-in-lieu-of-tax agreement with BorgWarner that will facilitate the investment.

BorgWarner and county officials say the new investment over the next five years will lead to the creation of at least 50 new jobs at the Seneca plant over the same time. The plant produces automotive drive trains.

"There is a lot of employment in this community related to the automotive industry," said Todd Bennington, vice-president of operations for BorgWarner, who addressed the County Council following the vote.

The Seneca plant now employs just short of 600 workers, Bennington said, and the just-approved agreement will help make it possible to increase the number of jobs.

Like other industries, Bennington said, BorgWarner experienced some difficulties in the recession, reaching a low point in the first quarter of 2008, but was resurging.

Last year, the BorgWarner plant in Seneca celebrated its fifteenth year in operation. Worldwide, BorgWarner employs about 19,250 people at 60 plants in 19 countries. In 2011, the company had sales of \$7.1 billion.

The Council also on Tuesday approved an amended agreement with the School District of Oconee County that will allocate up to \$1.3 million for a joint sewer system project down S.C. 11 from the site of the new Walhalla High School.

On the motion of Council member Reg Dexter the agreement was amended to specify "up to \$1.3 million" instead of earlier language calling for up to \$1.5 million in county funds.

County administrator Scott Moulder said he had cobbled together \$1.3 million from various county funds and had a verbal agreement with the school district that the district would cover any expenses over that amount.

More recent estimates on the cost of the sewer line down S.C. 11 were actually closer to \$1 million, Moulder said.

The project, as outlined in December by engineer Chuck Joye of the Anderson engineering firm Design South Professionals, would include about 20,000 feet of gravity-feed sewer line in an approximately four-mile line from the new Walhalla High School to a trunk line near Cane Creek.

The intent, according to county officials, is to open areas along north S.C. 11 to development.

School officials approached the county last year with the possibility of a joint venture as an alternative to either a septic system for the new high school, planned to open in early 2015, or a cheaper force main from the high school that would not further economic development.



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Showcase wins award at SC Rural Summit

Anderson, Oconee and Pickens Counties along with Todd Bennington, VP of Operations, BorgWarner, Seneca, SC took home the Rural Summit Education Awards for their part in the Business and Industry Showcase. "An Education Initiative." The Rural Summit Education Awards presented by Governor Nikki Haley, recognizes those who have im-



Governor Haley presents Borg Warner's Todd Bennington & Dan Robbins, respectively, with the Rural Summit Education Award.

proved South Carolina's rural education system either through volunteer efforts or daily commitments. Meelo Kanda, Director, Small Business & Rural Development Division, SC Department of Commerce commented, "The Anderson Oconee Pickens Business and Industry Showcase exposes 8th and 9th grade students to business and industry sectors that they otherwise may not have a chance to consider as potential career choices. This regional collaboration has touched the lives of over 5,000 youth in seven school districts in these three counties." He added, "The Showcase specifically helps students as they make further plans and decisions related to their Individual Graduation Plan as mandated by the Education and Economic Development act."

Highlighting the Rural Summit speaker's platform was the presentation by Todd Bennington, BorgWarner and Jim Alexander, Director, Oconee County Economic Development Commission. The duo opened the



Jim Alexander presents Oconee County's Rural Summit Education Award, with Governor Haley (L) and Deputy Secretary of Commerce George Petrick.

Rural Summit with their views on the need for workforce development and fostering skilled and dependable employees for the future. Mr. Bennington referenced trouble some workforce statistics that can be changed by partnerships with the school system and existing industry. Mr. Alexander

SEE SHOWCASE

Sermons & Teamwork

Jim Alexander, Director

Recently the South Carolina Power Team held their 2012 Annual Economic Development Review and I was fortunate enough to be invited to attend. Several very impressive speakers gave presentations confirming the same message this office has been "preaching" for the past 12 years: "You have to have infrastructure in place in order to attract and "and" a prospect." Amen.

Some speakers sent the message indicating that industrial prospects are driven by the location of their customers. What does that mean to Oconee County? It confirms that Oconee County needs to market our product to those areas the Upstate SC Air-ance studies and has recommended over the past several years including folks in the transportation business, vehicle and airplane manufacturing. We are blessed here in the Southeast to have numerous automobile and truck manufacturers and now, with Boeing located in South Carolina, there is additional potential to attract companies that supply aircraft parts. The great fact of the matter for Oconee County is: we have a short stretch of I-85 and very good 4-lane connecting roads that enables our industries to get the raw materials in the plant and the finished products to market in an efficient and timely manner for many different types of suppliers. Rail sites are at a premium in the county but a huge opportunity for investment exists with a 110 acre site near the

former Philips Fibers/Proflex Plant in Seneca. We look forward to development of this rail site and the enhancement of product infrastructure in Oconee County.

The development of Phase I of the Echo Hills Industrial Park along SC Highway 11, is critical. Two speakers at the SCPT Review who were directly involved in the Bridgestone and Continental Tire Projects coming to Aiken and Sumter Counties emphasized the absolute need of the following factors to ensure the company will make the decision to locate in your county. Teamwork by the local economic development office and county governmental agencies along with the state agencies:

1. The infrastructure (water, sewer, roads, electrical service, natural gas availability and telecommunications) must be in place.
2. Ability to provide quick permitting.
3. Be ready to assist in whatever way is necessary.
4. Keep the project confidential.

The speakers emphasized confidentiality of project information. Bridgestone and Continental had eliminated communities that did not honor this requirement. It makes me shudder to think Oconee County might have been eliminated because of a lack of discretion.

Sermons always conclude with what we know such as the contrast

SEE TEAMWORK

Future Looks Positive

Richard K. Blackwell, Director

It is an exciting time in Oconee County and the future of economic development looks very positive as I begin my tenure as the Director of the Oconee County Economic Development Commission.

Let me start by expressing my gratitude for this opportunity and my pledge to work extremely hard to continue to position the county for economic development success. I applaud the efforts of County Council and the County Administrator as they are continuing to make the necessary commitments to ensure the future is bright for the citizens of Oconee.

I view the role of the Oconee County Economic Development Commission as working as the county's economic development hub; helping to coordinate, consolidate, and then catalyze economic development initiatives. The Commission's aim is to generate wealth and improve the quality of life in the County. Attracting and

retaining businesses, ensuring the availability of a high-quality workforce, continuing to focus on product development and championing a clear understanding of the supreme opportunities available in Oconee County.

I am thankful to Jim Alexander for the many years of hard work he dedicated to Oconee County and I wish the opportunity to learn from him.

The next few months will be busy as I work to get out into the community and seek in all that Oconee is and on the personal side, begin to move my family here. My wife, Allison, and my fifteen-month old daughter, Ellen, are ready to begin our new chapter of life in Oconee County.

In closing, thank you again for your support of economic development as it is a marathon not a sprint. Let's continue to work together as economic development is a team sport. Oconee is primed for a promising future and I begin with each of us.



Richard Blackwell joins the Commission as the new Executive Director, his first day is April 2, 2012.

SHOWCASE

reviewed the 2011 Business and Industry Showcase held at the Clemson University Littlejohn Coliseum. The Showcase has a significant impact on the students giving them hands-on experience with actual manufacturing examples from industrial plants located near their homes and interviews with businesses people that offer services to their families. Career opportunities, education and skill requirements for the job and potential employment and wage information are all offered at the Showcase.

TEAMWORK

is no longer with the county next door or a nearby state. We are competing for the future jobs of our children and grandchildren with China, India, many countries in South America and Europe.

That means we need to be ready! Oconee County must be the best we can be to "attract" companies with our infrastructure, ready industrial parks and teamwork to make the project viable. Yes, it costs money to buy property, develop business and industrial sites but it is a solid investment for the future and the only way for economic growth and job creation.

Yes, indeed, teamwork is the answer. As I mention every chance I get, a great team has been developed in Oconee County with the SC Department of Commerce, our utility providers, local government agencies, economic development groups like our Economic Development Commission, the Upstate SC Alliance, the Oconee Alliance, Chambers of Commerce, School District of Oconee County, Tri-County Technical College, Clemson University and the Oconee County Industrial Group. The collaboration of these teammates makes Oconee County prepared and ready for the future. I hope you are part of the team!

Oconee's gain is a win for the Upstate

Editor

I want to congratulate the county council of Oconee County for hiring Richard Blackwell as its new economic developer. You will not find a harder worker and more dedicated public steward than Richard Blackwell. During Richard's five year tenure with the Alliance, he worked tirelessly to assist in the recruitment of jobs and capital investment for our 10-county Upstate region. While serving as the voice for our economic development efforts, he was also responsible for fundraising, contributor services, event planning, public affairs, media relations and all forms of communication. I am sure the citizens of Oconee County will appreciate his talent and hard work as much as we did. Oconee's gain is a win for our entire region.

H&J Johnson, President/CEO
Upstate SC Alliance

Reprinted from: YOUR VIEW
(The Journal - Thursday, March 29, 2012)

EDC Chairman welcomes "The State of Oconee"

The Oconee County Economic Development Commission was an Event Sponsor for the "State of Oconee" Luncheon held March 16th at the Northside Elementary School in Seneca. Hank Field, Chairman, EDC, welcomed over 200 community leaders and guests attending the 4th Annual "State of Oconee" event hosted by the Oconee County Chamber of Commerce, Walhalla Chamber of Commerce and the Westminster Chamber of Commerce.

Vision for Oconee highlighted the program with comments from municipal and county

may leaders including Scott Moulser, Administrator, Oconee County, Mayor Garry Edwards, Walhalla, Mayor Rick McCormick, Westminster, Mayor Linda Oliver, West Union, Greg Dietterick, Seneca City Administrator, Glen McPheeters, Fair Play and Ed Lund, Long Creek/Mountain Rest areas.

The annual luncheon provides opportunities for all segments of Oconee County to present up-to-date information related to projects and activities to the business community, industrial representatives, educators and the general public.