



Oconee County Economic Development Commission  
Minutes of Meeting  
August 17, 2012

The Oconee County Economic Development Commission meeting was held August 17, 2012 at the Commission office, 302 East Main Street, Walhalla, SC.

**Attendance**

**Commission Members:**

- Kim Alexander, District I
- Harold Gibson, District II
- Hank Field, District III
- Sammy Dickson, District IV
- Gene Blair, District V

**Ex-Officio Members:**

- Scott Moulder, County Administrator
- Ronnie L. Booth, President, Tri-County Technical College
- Michael Lucas, Superintendent, School District of Oconee County
- Jeanne L. Ward, President/CEO Oconee Medical Center
- Marvin Carmichael, Chief of Staff, Assistant to the President, Clemson University
- Robert C. Winchester, Director, Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority
- Art Holbrooks, Director, Planning Commission
- Jim Gadd, Executive Director, Oconee Alliance
- John Lummus, VP Economic Development, Tri-County Technical College

**EDC Staff:**

- Richard K. Blackwell, Executive Director
- Russell Johnson, Project & Marketing Manager
- Thelma Miller, Administrative Assistant

**Guests:**

- Ms. Walker Smith, Regional Director, Congressman Jeff Duncan
- Reg Dexter, County Council District V
- Dave Eldridge, Interim Chair, MLBDC
- W.C. (Bozo) Richards, Citizen

**News Media:**

- Dick Mangrum, Radio WGOG
- Ray Chandler, Anderson Independent Mail
- Mike Eads, The Journal

**Call to Order:** Mr. Field, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**Action to Approve the Agenda:** Mr. Dickson moved the agenda be approved, Mr. Gibson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Minutes Approved:** Mr. Blair moved the Minutes of the May 18, 2012 meeting be approved; motion seconded by Mr. Dickson. Motion carried.

**Oconee County Update:** Mr. Moulder, County Administrator, commented on good things happening in the County and deferred to Mr. Blackwell to report the news to the Commission.

**Oconee Alliance Update:** Mr. Jim Gadd, Executive Director was not available.

**Directors Report:** Mr. Richard Blackwell, Executive Director, gave comments including:

- This week's announcement that A.I.D. Corporation, a business of RBC Bearings, is buying the shell building. The \$7 million investment will create 75 new jobs over the next five years.
- A recording of Bob Crawford, RBC Bearings, Inc. comments to Council on reasons for locating in Oconee County were played:
  - Economic Development Team answered questions
  - Availability of "spec" building
  - Education system provides for qualified and available employees

**Echo Hills**

- County Council plans to begin Phase I construction of Echo Hills Industrial Park.
- Three months to complete 300,000 SF and 50,000 SF pads at Echo Hills.
- Creates a viable industrial park to market heavily with potential to sell out before built.
- Encourage addition of new "spec" building as it shortens prospects' time frame, within this park.

**Strategic Plan**

- Strategic Plan moving forward with timeline to present to County Council in November.
- Strategic Plan Steering Committee scheduled for late September and October. First meeting was held in July.

**Business Development Report**

July Business Development Summary statistics show ongoing activity:

- ✓ 28 Leads, 6 prospects and 10 projects
- ✓ 5 new companies, 5 existing companies
- ✓ 6 national and 4 international
- ✓ 50% of the contacts call directly, 18 % from the SCDOC and 16% from the Upstate SC Alliance. Other sources are Allies, Broker/Realtor and Utilities
- ✓ 61% of the project activity is manufacturing.
- Other significant BDC activities
  - Golden Corner Commerce Park Master Plan finalized
  - Echo Hills Industrial Park in Phase III of the "site certification" process
  - Seneca Rail Site deal finalized
  - EDC sponsor of upstate energy Summit & Expo.

The Iron video, a "How It's Made" TV presentation will be shown in September.

**Mountain Lakes Business Development Corporation:** Mr. Dave Eldridge, Interim Chair, reported the Oconee Business Development Center/Incubator has with several businesses renting space. Mentors are providing service to approximately 40 clients.

Anderson and Pickens Counties are ready to launch Business Incubators. The City of Easley in Pickens County is providing a building and Easley Combined Utilities will donate utility services. The TCTC monthly training programs for entrepreneurs will start in September.

**Project and Marketing Report:** Russell Johnson, Projects and Marketing Manager, reported:

- Anderson-Oconee-Pickens Business & Industry Showcase September 12-13, Littlejohn Coliseum on the campus of Clemson University.
- Plan to attend Showcase VIP Event September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.
- Exhibit Booth and Sponsorship opportunities are still available.
- Business Facilities magazine featured editorial written by Richard Bleekwell, Exec. Dir.
- EDC has entered world of Social Media. Visit [www.facebook.com/InvestOconeeSC](http://www.facebook.com/InvestOconeeSC) and [www.twitter.com/InvestOconeeSC](http://www.twitter.com/InvestOconeeSC).
- Newsletter has a new image and format with timely updates utilizing an on-line system. July issue had distribution of 4,598 e-mail addresses.
- A.J.D. Announcement was sent August 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3,216 addresses.

**Old Business:** Dr. Ronnie Booth encouraged the EDC members to attend the September 13<sup>th</sup> Oconee Alliance meeting. Secretary Bobby Hitt, State of South Carolina, Department of Commerce, will be the guest speaker. Seating for the luncheon meeting will begin at 11:30 a.m. at the Thrift Development Corp. Bountyland office. RSVP for the meeting by 3:00 p.m., September 10<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Dexter commented on a recent conference he attended where public comments were made regarding the marketing advantage held by Oconee County in having a "spec" building for sale. Consulting firm representatives in attendance at the meeting confirmed the value of this product.

Mr. Moulder reported that he along with Assistant Administrator, Glenn Breed, and Mr. Johnson, Project & Marketing Manager, recently met with Secretary Hitt in his Columbia office to discuss economic development in Oconee County. Mr. Moulder was impressed with the amount of time spent and interest expressed by Secretary Hitt.

**New Business:** Dr. Lucas, Superintendent, School District of Oconee County, commented on the Summer Graduation Ceremony honoring 23 graduates including students from each of the four high schools in the District. The SDOC is working with the Oconee Alliance in developing a new Junior Oconee Leadership program. Junior class students are eligible for this opportunity that will encourage them to return to the County following college.

Mr. Carmichael commented that 3,500 freshman are embarking on Clemson University studies comprising the University's largest Freshman Class ever. One-third of the students are engineering majors. 600 students are transferring from Tri-County Technical College. 1,200 volunteers will help students move into dorms and adjust to University life. He invited the Commission members to attend the Downtown Clemson Festival welcoming the students.

**Next Meeting:** September 21, 2012 at the EDC office convening at 9:00 a.m.

**Adjourn:** At 10:00 a.m. Mr. Dickson moved, Mr. Gibson seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Thelma Miller  
Secretary