

Oconee County Economic Development Commission
Directors Report

December 2011

- December 01 Office visit with representatives of the Davis & Floyd Engineering, Architecture and Environmental firm from the Greenville office.
- Represented the EDC at the Town of Salem holiday event.
- December 02 Annual Holiday Hello reception/drop-in held at the EDC office to kick-off the holiday season. Event is privately sponsored.
- December 05 South Carolina Department of Commerce representatives visited Oconee County to review available buildings, sites and industrial parks.
- December 06 Meeting with newly hired project manager for the Hart Corporation. The real estate company represents buildings in the County. Toured county and looked at shell building, and available sites and buildings.
- Attended County Council meeting. Third and Final Reading on Project FL5 (BASF) \$60 M investment and 25 new jobs to be created over five years.
- December 07 Attended meeting of the WorkLink Board of Directors held at the Madren Center, Clemson University.
- Office visit with announced candidate for County Council 2012.
- December 08 Attended the monthly meeting of the Oconee Alliance held at the Thrift Development Corp. offices, Seneca, SC.
- Participated in the Employee Appreciation Luncheon hosted by County Council in Council Chambers at the Pine Street Adm. Complex.
- Reviewed Brown Building for remodeling needs for MLBDC incubator.
- December 09 Attended the CollinsCraft Corporation ribbon cutting ceremony for their new facility located on Highway 123 near Westminster.
- Meeting with individual interested in High-tech business development assistance.
- Meeting with Economic Development Director from Aiken-Edgefield Counties.
- December 11 Meeting of the MLBDC Board of Directors held at EDC office.
- Walk-through of Brown Building (MLBDC incubator) with County Facilities Director and remodeling contractor.
- Activity update with member of County Council.
- December 13 Attended the Business-Education Partnership monthly meeting.
- Working Project Call, locating GIS Maps and other county demographics.
- Attended monthly meeting of OASHRM, Human Resource organization.
- December 14 Staff represented the EDC at the Upstate Alliance Local Developers meeting in Greenville.

Oconee County Economic Development Commission
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December 2011

December 14 Project and Marketing Manager involved in Service Contract Reviews for the Office of Oconee County Procurement.

December 14-31 Out of the office on medical leave.



James W. Alexander
Director



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Written By Ray Chandler

When Jim Alexander looks back on his last full year as Oconee County's economic development director he'll know he went out on a win. Despite an economy that made any gains difficult,

Jim announced in August that he would retire at the end of June 2012, leaving the position he's held since 1999.

The brightest note of 2011 was the single largest industrial investment in the county's history,

a \$60 million expansion announced in November by BASF.

The high-tech company, which manufactures and distributes precious metal catalysts, chemicals, salts, solutions and chemically precipitated precious metal-activated powders, is expected to add 25 jobs to its Seneca plant. The plant already employs about 350 people.



The ribbon cutting celebrating the Grand Opening of the Colins Creek Expansion.

Alexander's tenure that he always emphasized the long-term view.

And using all the tools at one's disposal, such as fee-in-lieu agreements and infrastructure tax credits. The latter played a role in helping another company in Oconee County in 2011.

In January, the Ohio-based Altera Polymers announced it was bringing a facility to Oconee County, investing about \$4 million and creating about 75 jobs. A county-approved infrastructure tax credit was one of the deal sealers.

The plant, located in the old Propex building in Seneca, deals with formulation technologies in



Altera Polymers occupies 75,000 SF of the former Propex Facility.

The expansion will be facilitated by a fee-in-lieu-of-taxes agreement brokered by Alexander's office and BASF officials, most prominently BASF plant manager Frank Lamson-Scribner, and approved by the County Council. The arrangement will bring Oconee County approximately \$7 million in fees over 24 years.

The BASF expansion was the product of about four years of talks, and exemplifies the slow-but-steady-wins-the-race strategy that economic development often demands. It was a hallmark of



Available product, or lack thereof, was what Alexander advocated most. In 2011, Oconee County took ownership of a 50,000 SF Shell Building, located in the Oconee County Commerce Center. Referred to by one official as "the best Shell Building in South Carolina."

See OPPORTUNITIES, Page 5

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEMBERS



Ms. Kim Alexander
Council District I



Mr. Harold Gibson
Council District II



Mr. Hank Field, Chairman
Council District III



Mr. Sammy Dickson
Council District IV



Mr. Gene Blair
Council District IV

Ex-Officio Members



Mr. Scott Moulder, Administrator
Oconee County



Mr. Art Holbrooks, Director
Oconee County Planning



Dr. Ronnie L. Booth, President
Tri-County Technical College



Mr. John Lummus
VP for Economic Development
Tri-County Technical College



Dr. Michael Lucas, Superintendent
School District of Oconee County



Dr. Jeanne L. Ward, President/CEO
Oconee Medical Center



Mr. Marvin G. Carmichael
Clemson University



Mr. Robert C. Winchester
General Superintendent
Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority



Mr. Jim Gadd, Executive Director
Oconee Alliance

EDC Staff Members:

- Jim Alexander, Director
- Russell Johnson, Project & Marketing Manager
- Thelma Miller, Administrative Assistant

2012 EDC Meeting Schedule

The Oconee County Economic Development Commission meets on the third Friday of the month starting at 9:00 a.m. at the EDC office 502 East Main Street, Walhalla, SC. The meetings are open to the public.

January 20	July 20
February 18	August 17
March 16	September 21
April 20	October 19
May 18	November 16
June 15	December 21

(Meeting dates are tentative and subject to change)

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Jim Alexander
Director

Exceptional!

The past, present and the future are safe ways to approach any annual report but some deviation is necessary when talking about an exceptional year. 2011 provided many good stories and exceptional successes.

It all started with Aitera Polymers announcing a location to the former Propex building in Seneca. Barry Rhedes, owner, of this polyolefin and engineered resin operation is positive about the features of the facility that will allow long term business achievements.

The completion of the "shell" building in the Oconee County Commerce Center became an exceptional county economic development tool. Multiple clients and consultants have visited. Excellent reviews included, "Great looking building," "Super-facility flexibility," "Floors were a good move," "Good planning on the 32' clear ceiling height," and "Expansion from 50 to 200,000 SF has appeal to a variety of clients." This building will attract the "right" prospect bringing new jobs and investment in the New Year.

An exceptional opportunity developed with the purchase of 400 acres along Highway 11 creating the Echo Hills industrial park. Infrastructure engineering is complete; the City of Walhalla is lay-

ing pipe and will soon turn on the water for the industrial clients. Echo Hills will attract. Sewer right-of-way has been secured and further improvements will be completed this year. Construction has started on an electrical sub-station on the property.

County Council adopted zoning ordinances for all three industrial parks: Oconee County Commerce Center, Echo Hills Park, and the Golden Corner Commerce Park. Their efforts have also established covenants for the Parks.

CollinsCraft Corporation near Westminster is celebrating the new 66,000 square foot facility built to meet additional production endeavors and in the process save twenty-five jobs for Oconee County citizens. Congratulations to Ken Collins and his team for this exceptionally beautiful showplace.

New and exciting for the year was the development of the Mountain Lakes Business Development Corporation. The business incubator program under the leadership of Carl Cliche, Chairman of the MLBDC Board of Directors is designed to accelerate the successful development of entrepreneurial companies and new business start-up projects. The county's Brown Building in Walhalla will house the incubator facility. The exceptional effort to support small business and entrepreneurial support will help these folks stay in business for the long term.

What does it take to lay claim to an exceptional year? The BASF Corporation made a \$80 Million expansion announcement. The

investment will include 25 new jobs to substantiate the "exceptional year" title. It is believed that the BASF investment is the single largest industrial announcement ever made in the County.

So what about 2012? It is an exciting time in Oconee County and the future of economic development holds more positive steps, I think. . . .

- Several members of the industrial family will have expansion news.
- A bold move by County Council will initiate sewer infrastructure in the I-85 region of the county.
- The Golden Corner Commerce Park will get a detailed Master Plan.
- Location for the third "Shell" building will be selected.
- Coordinated efforts with the county, municipalities, and communities will provide numerous opportunities to make good things happen.

2012 will be GREAT Year!



Governor Haley is pictured naming Michael Higgins, Itron, Inc., (middle) South Carolina Ambassador for Economic Development. Also pictured, House Speaker Bobby Harrell (right).

A WORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Mr. Hank Field
EDC Chairman

Jobs and capital investment are the primary pursuits of the Oconee County Economic Development Department. Success in these two areas is the foundation of a sound local economy. When every man and woman who wants to work is able to find work, small retail and service businesses thrive. When private investment is made in real estate, buildings and equipment, our county is able to function at a reduced cost to individual property owners.

Job creation and attraction of capital investment takes more than wishful thinking and requires a great deal of groundwork and preparation. Just being a great place to live is not enough. We must recognize that in order to attract a growing, job-producing industry base, we must first look within ourselves and find ways to improve our community, our services and our facilities. The days when industry moved into areas where labor was cheap are over.

Today, American industry is driven where the workforce is well educated, self-motivated and precision oriented. Industry seeks to locate itself in communities that have prepared themselves with the utilities it needs and a workforce that is dedicated to quality performance. And, it is willing to pay higher wages to this dedicated workforce.

We are very fortunate to have great leadership in our county and municipal governments. In our representation in the statehouse, in our school district, in our emergency and medical services, in our industry sector, and in our water, power and sewer utilities. Great leadership in these areas is crucial to strong economic development, and we are blessed with ladies and gentlemen with great vision, passion and fortitude. Leaders who know that unless we continuously prepare ourselves for a better future, the future will be bleak. Our leadership is pushing ahead, steadfastly, to place us at the forefront of economic opportunity, and many in the field of industry recruitment and

economic development throughout South Carolina know that we mean business.

We are laying the foundation necessary to take full advantage of an ever-changing industrial paradigm, and a highly competitive industry recruitment market. Our County Council has moved to develop land for industrial, processing and distribution use. Our utilities are moving to supply these areas with their services. We have lengthened the runway at our airport and expanded its services. And perhaps most importantly, our school district is working harder than ever to prepare our young people for the workplace of the future.

It is reassuring to know that as the national economy improves, we are in the proper position to take advantage of it. As this year-end report attests, 2011 was a year of hard work and accomplishment on the part of many Oconeeans. With great pride and confidence, I look forward to more of the same for 2012.

VOLUNTEERISM KEY FOR ALLIANCE IN 2011



Jim Gadd
Executive Director

Citizens of Oconee County once again proved that they are willing to work together to improve life in our community.

Implementation of the 2008 - 2028 Vision Plan, Oconee By Choice, continued. A mentoring program matches a volunteer with an eighth student who is selected by the school guidance personnel. The program is designed to encourage students to overcome challenges and to graduate from high school. Volunteers continue to distribute an upcoming events calendar and to sponsor educational programs about conservation and sustainability. Their film series is in its third year. We assisted local industry to develop and con-

duct the 4th annual Business-Industry Showcase at Littlejohn Coliseum. This event gives eighth and ninth grade students in Oconee, Pickens, and Anderson counties the opportunity to talk with members of the local business community in order to learn the skills that they will need to acquire or develop in order to have a successful career.

Since its inception in 2008, the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) has generated an economic impact of over \$5,000,000. Bus tours, fishing tournaments, and visitors have increased significantly and the financial impact from their visits during 2011 was \$2,800,000. Data from the state revealed that Oconee County ranked 9th out of 46 counties in South Carolina in percentage growth of tourism from 2009 to 2010. Our economic impact was up

9.78% and had a positive impact on jobs, payroll, and taxes collected. Finally, our CVB won the prestigious Shining Light Example Award as the Best Performing CVB in the Southeast for CVBs with a budget under \$2,000,000. We were competing with 119 other communities and WE WON!

We continued with our monthly education meetings that are open to the public. Speakers included an economist, several plant managers from local industry, a zoning specialist, and President Jim Barker of Clemson University. We also heard from leaders of non-profits, experts in the fields of healthcare and tourism, and our legislative delegation. We close 2011 with high hopes for 2012.

Capital Investment & Job Creation

2011

Company	New/Expansion	Capital Investment	Jobs
Altera Polymers	New	4,000,000	50
Collins Craft	Expansion	1,750,000	5
BASF Catalysts	Expansion	60,000,000	25
Totals		65,750,000	80

2010

US Engine Valve Corporation	Expansion	18,000,000	5
Schnieder Electric	Equip Upgrade	5,000,000	5
Keyo Bearings	FILoT Extension	5,000,000	
Totals		28,000,000	10

2009

Greenfield Industries	Expansion	18,000,000	115
Itron	Equip Upgrade	30,000,000	350
Totals		48,000,000	465

Opportunities from Page 1:

polyolefin, engineered resins and master batch technologies. A portion of the company's feedstock comes from recycled plastics.

In December, CollinsCraft, near Westminster, formally opened its new facility, which holds the promise of 20 additional high-skilled jobs over five years. The new, 66,000-square-foot facility represents an investment of about \$1.75 million.

Looking forward, a new economic development director is expected to be hired early in 2012. Six candidates from many applications were interviewed in December, according to county administrator Scott Moulder. Plans call for the new director to spend some time with Alexander through June getting the lay of the land.

Part of that land will be the county's twin challenges of developing

and marketing the county's two industrial parks, the Golden Corner Commerce Park, off S.C. 59, near Fair Play, and the Echo Hills park, off S.C. 11 in the center of the County. Efforts now focus on getting sewer and water infrastructure to the sites.

They both, in a way, will form part of the legacy Alexander leaves as he retires. It was important, he preached, to have something to sell, and to be ready to move when you have a chance to land a prospect.



Thomasboro Salem Middle School student Dillon Deppert attracts a burst of electric energy from a ball of light to his hand at the AOP Business & Industry Showcase.

Independent Mail Photo



The Upstate SC alliance, in partnership with the Oconee County Economic Development Commission, hosted Ed McCallum of McCallum Sweeney Consulting for a Pictured (l-r) Jim Alexander, Director, EDC; Ed McCallum, McCallum Sweeney Consultants; Richard Blackwell, VP, Upstate SC Alliance & Hank Fiehl, Chairman, Oconee County EDC.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP A PRIORITY MOVING FORWARD



Carl Cliche, Chairman
Mountain Lakes
Business Development
Corporation

The MLBDC is a cooperative initiative of Oconee County and Tri-County Technical College that is designed to recruit, develop and mentor entrepreneurship in the Tri-County Region of Anderson, Pickens and Oconee counties. Alliances have been formed between the South Carolina Small Business Development Centers, SCORE, and Clemson.

Currently, the MLBDC is working with over 200 clients at various stages of small business development. In support of this, an Immersion Program has been developed at Tri-County Tech that helps entrepre-

neurs develop a business plan and to develop a broader set of business management skills. Other initiatives have been started with Clemson that support MLBDC clients in the area of mechanical engineering and architecture.

Five businesses are up and running with over 25 new jobs created in the region. An additional dozen companies are progressing through various stages of start-up.

A crucial achievement of the MLBDC, with the support and cooperation of Oconee County, is the development of small business incubators in the Region. The first incubator opened in January 2012 and begins with 5 new start-ups and approximately 10 new jobs. Another

incubator is being developed in Easley where three entrepreneurs wait to take up incubator space.

Many other initiatives with Clemson University and start-ups are underway that will add more new small start-up companies to the area along with the multiplier of jobs.

The effort could not have been successful in producing new companies and in excess of 50 new jobs without the efforts of the members of the MLBDC Board of Directors, Oconee County, Dr. Ronnie Booth and the staff at Tri-County Technical College. And, in 2012, MLBDC will add many efforts supported by Clemson University to its ability to create new start-ups and jobs.

CHANGE, CHANGE AND MORE CHANGE

Jim's announcement to retire was not the only change seen around the Economic Development office in 2011. The Mountain Lakes Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) completed its 3 year trial period, successfully. Over the course the CVB increased Accommodations Tax collections by 27% overall and in 2010 alone tourism generated an economic impact of \$47.2 million dollars in Oconee County. As a result of the success, the Oconee Alliance and Oconee County Council unanimously agreed the CVB should continue its mission on a permanent basis.

With the City of Waihalla, under the direction of the Waihalla Partners for Progress, completing a restoration of the "Historic Earle House," space was offered to the CVB to use as Oconee's official Visitor Welcome Center. "It was a perfect solution for the CVB as it provided more than enough room for a visitors center with brochure racks, reception foyer, offices for the growing staff and a conference room," said Ken Sloan, President & CEO of the CVB. "The

CVB accepted the offer and with the EDC's blessings, moved from the EDC office to the Earle House in October of 2011."

The Economic Development Commission served as an incubator of sorts for the CVB during its trial period. "Given the established and limited CVB budget, we could not have afforded office space, so this was a huge benefit to our organization. But the added bonus was that I had

the opportunity to talk with and learn from the EDC staff that enabled both organizations the unique opportunity to better understand the significance of the relationship between the economic development and tourism," said Sloan.

Thus has been the case of 2011. Change came seemingly with the seasons. 2012 brings new challenges and opportunities in Oconee and the TEAM is ready!



The "Historic Earle House" is located on the Corner of South Broad and College Street's in Waihalla, SC. The building houses the Convention & Visitors Bureau and the Waihalla Chamber of Commerce.

[Print \(#\)](#)

Spec building inventory nearly exhausted



From the Jan. 16 print edition: The recession has changed the speculative building game significantly throughout S.C. Upstate counties have benefited in the past from private developers' investment in spec buildings. Now, lenders are unwilling to finance them after taking big hits on spec construction during the recession.



Oconee County completed this 50,000-square-foot spec building in June, funded with public money and utility tax credit funds. Oconee County filled one spec building during the recession and hopes to fill this one in 2012. (Photo/Provided)

by Liz Segrist

lsegrist@scbiznews.com (<mailto:lsegrist@scbiznews.com>)

Published Jan. 18, 2012

Seeking space for industrial recruitment, Upstate counties are taking creative steps to finance and develop speculative buildings.

Oconee County put up its own money, for example, and Laurens County created virtual space.



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older manufacturing guidelines; manufacturers' needs in a facility have changed.

"We are pretty much exhausted in all our spec buildings that we have," said Spartanburg County Council Chairman Jeffrey Horton, noting that 50,000- to 100,000-square-foot buildings are lacking and most needed for industry recruitment.

Existing, quality speculative buildings attract companies looking to an area since they can be upfitted for their needs and move-in time is shortened. Sites that are permitted and pad ready have a major advantage.

"Financial markets have made it a little more challenging to have product built speculatively without a company committed," said Carter Smith, executive vice president of the Economic Futures Group in Spartanburg County. "In this economy, a company often waits longer to pull the trigger and when they do, they need to move quickly."

Oconee County is one exception to the rule.

Oconee County completed one 40,000-square-foot spec building in 2006 and sold it in the midst of the recession in 2008. The county's most recent spec building was completed in June and is expected to fill in 2012.

The recession has changed the speculative building game significantly throughout South Carolina. Upstate counties have benefited in the past from private developers' investment in speculative buildings and industrial park development. Now, lenders are unwilling to finance them after taking big hits on speculative construction during the recession.

Oconee County and Abbeville County have one spec building each, and Greenville County has a partial spec building remaining.

"There's a huge market for spec buildings, but no one is willing to financially step out and build them," said Marvin Moss, executive director of Laurens County Development Corp., or LCDC.

While there are opportunities for commercial construction, banks largely are not lending on speculative projects where the loan repayment is dependent on the sale of the new construction, said Dixon Woodward, a regional market president in South Carolina for TD Bank. Lenders will look to some other recurring source of borrowers' income as repayment on construction loans, he said.

"It's going to continue to be challenging for those who want to put up spec buildings and industrial space as banks try to manage their risk," Woodward said.

Economic developers say spec buildings are extremely instrumental in their efforts to continue attracting industry. The Upstate has many older industrial buildings available, but many were designed under

It is 50,000 square feet, expandable to 200,000, and has 32-foot-high ceilings and 50-by-50 column spacing.

It is funded by utility tax credit funds and economic development funds from the county. Economic developers lobbied the Oconee County Council to get the funding.

"If we don't build it here, no one is coming to visit. We don't have an area that generates so much traffic that private developers want to build on it," said Russell Johnson, the county's project and marketing manager. "We have to take it on ourselves to create the product and build it ourselves."

The S.C. Department of Commerce recommends square footage for spec buildings ranging from 50,000 to 200,000; ceiling height clearance of 25 to 30 feet or above; wide column spacing; numerous dock doors; and other needs for manufacturing or distribution businesses.

Counties are exploring creative ways to develop a speculative building inventory. LCDC found an alternative to deal with Laurens County's lack of spec buildings by creating a virtual spec building online [here](http://laurenscounty.org/nd/properties/industrial-buildings/hunter-virtual-spec/) (<http://laurenscounty.org/nd/properties/industrial-buildings/hunter-virtual-spec/>).

The Laurens Commission of Public Works and LCDC funded an 118,000-square-foot pre-compact pad and Moss Associates in Greenville designed a 50,000-square-foot building to eventually be built on the pad in Hunter Industrial Park.

"To build a 50,000-square-foot spec building, it will cost about \$1 million," Moss said. "No one wants to spend that on a spec building right now."

It has been on the market for a few years. The pre-built pad and pre-designed building can save two to three months when a company confirms, shortening move-in time to 120 days.

Available buildings in the Upstate

10 Upstate Counties	Spec buildings available	Available/used buildings	Square Footage
Abbeville-Anderson	1	5	791,028
Cherokee	0	10	1.17 million
Greenville	0	8	1.34 million
Greenwood	1*	43	4.52 million
Laurens	0	9	909,897
Oconee	0	1	625,975
Pickens	1	7	705,646
Spartanburg	0	4	330,800
Union	0	44	5 million
	0	2	650,279
Totals	3	135	15.9 million

*The Greenville County spec building is partially used.

Source: The S.C. Department of Commerce's Buildings and Sites GIS Locator website.

Available buildings

The Upstate has 135 available buildings in every county that were previously used for a variety of industries, according to the S.C. Department of Commerce's interactive website of building and site availability. The buildings are all different ages, conditions, ceiling heights and floor layouts.

Some of these buildings might require some substantial upfitting. Others might be a good fit for incoming industry.

"Over 75% of projects looking to relocate begin their search for a suitable building in hopes of finding a building that will meet most of their needs resulting in a quicker start-up and faster return on the company's investment," said Amy Love, the S.C. Department of Commerce's communications director.

Moss Associates built a spec building for Abbeville County a few years ago, which remains empty. Don Warren, of Moss Associates, who has been in the construction industry for more than 30 years in the

Upstate, said banks and private developers aren't willing to finance in this economy and company owners are looking to move in while incurring as little cost as possible.

"Most economic developers would love to have a spec building to sell because owners want to see what they're getting," Warren said. "Hopefully, the economy continues to get better and new construction becomes a first choice instead of the last choice."

Attracting industry

The flipside to lacking in speculative buildings means industry has moved in to take them off the market. The Upstate continues to attract industry despite the dwindling inventory.

The S.C. Department of Commerce and local economic development agencies recruited \$3.3 billion in investment and 14,855 jobs in 2011. The Greenville Area Development Corp. recruited 3,100 jobs and more than \$275 million in capital investment through 19 announcements in 2011.

ZF Transmissions LLC nears completion of its 947,000-square-foot facility in Laurens County. Bosch Rexroth Corp. makes its biggest investment in its hydraulics manufacturing operations in Fountain Inn with a 260,000-square-foot expansion of production space.

Pickens County saw a record year in 2011, recruiting five companies to locate operations and expand within five months through refurbishing facilities.

Amazon plans to invest around \$50 million and construct a 1-million-square-foot distribution facility in an industrial park in Spartanburg County.

Love said counties with low spec building inventories need to evaluate existing assets to find potential opportunities in abandoned buildings or buildings with refurbishing potential.

"It's a concept of making your community attractive, which is not just about downtown revitalization," Love said, noting site preparation, spec buildings, industrial parks and infrastructure as crucial components. "All of those things are going to support the county in making that area attractive, particularly to a manufacturer looking to locate."

Editor Scott Milner contributed to this story.

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ForwardMotions »

Grow. Improve. Visualize. Empower.



AdvanceSC Quarterly News • January 2012

AdvanceSC Helps Fund BASF Seneca Plant Expansion

The Oconee County Economic Development Commission has been awarded a \$100,000 grant from AdvanceSC towards the expansion of the BASF plant in Seneca. The BASF Seneca plant manufactures and distributes precision metal catalysts, chemicals, salts, solutions and chemically precipitated precious metal activated powders.

"With assistance from AdvanceSC, the BASF expansion project will change the footprint of our operations," said Frank Garrison, Sr. Owner, BASF plant manager, Seneca. "At the conclusion of our facility's expansion in 2015, the project will have invested \$52 million in the Duke Energy-served area of Oconee County. We are excited to say that this is the single largest investment in Oconee County's history."



The expansion of the high tech company is expected to add 25 jobs throughout the next three years.

"This project is an example of how aiding and nurturing existing industries is just as important as recruiting new ones," said Jim Alexander, director of Oconee County Economic Development. "It also exemplifies the importance of public and private entities working together in job creation and economic development to ready our communities for future and sustainable growth."

The BASF Seneca project came to fruition due to a close working partnership between the Oconee County Economic Development Commission, Duke Energy, AdvanceSC, Oconee County Council, the South Carolina Department of Commerce, Upstate S.C. Alliance, Tri-County Technical College, ReadySC, the Gooder-



To better prepare students in the Upstate for manufacturing readiness, Spartanburg Community College received a \$100,000 grant from AdvanceSC to establish its own Certified Technician Program. The program, called Jobs for the Future with MSSC and WorkKeys, utilizes AdvanceSC funds to support the education and training that individuals need to successfully complete the MSSC certification exams. Additionally, the program encourages students to pursue a career in advanced manufacturing and manufacturing production. Classes begin in January 2012.



"We are very appreciative of AdvanceSC's forward thinking vision and generosity in supporting our initiative to provide a trained and skilled workforce to Upstate/South

County Industrial Group and Fort Hill Natural Gas.

The Oconee County Economic Development Commission aims to improve the quality of life for citizens of Oconee County by encouraging a diversified economy that attracts industrial and commercial investment and fosters retention of existing business and industry.

AdvanceSC Grant Helps Spartanburg Community College Prepare Students in Manufacturing Readiness

With pressure on today's companies to produce more with less, and with technology quickly and constantly advancing, companies now seek employees with higher skill sets for all positions - including entry level.

The cost associated with finding entry level candidates who possess manufacturing skills continues to rise. This, coupled with the high cost of providing on-the-job training for new employees on the basic practices of safety, quality, manufacturing and maintenance, creates a challenge for many companies.

The Manufacturing Skills Standards Council (MSSC) developed a nationally accredited program that arms graduates with a Certified Production Technician title upon successful completion. With this program in place, companies can have the confidence that new employees will possess the basic skills needed in today's manufacturing workforce.

Story continued at top right

Caroline companies," said Mike Forrester, interim director of Corporate and Community Education for Spartanburg Community College. "We are actively recruiting students for the program in our three-county service area of Cherokee, Spartanburg and Union."

Spartanburg Community College is a public, two-year, multi-site, suburban college serving the citizens and communities of Cherokee, Spartanburg and Union Counties of South Carolina.

Upcoming Deadline Reminders:

- Economic Development Applications - 3/31/2012
- Manufacturing Competitiveness Applications - 3/31/2012
- Education Applications - 3/31/2012

[Go to SCWorks](#)

Education Foundation of Oconee County



1st place winner
\$500 Cash Prize

Other
cash prizes
awarded

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28TH

Don't miss the chance to play!

Walhalla High School Cafeteria

9:00 - 9:45 am - Registration

10:00 am - 4:00 pm - Tournament

Entry fee - \$25.00 Student fee - \$18.00

Preregister before January 23rd and pay only \$20.00

Sponsored by the

Westminster Chamber of Commerce • Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative

Rules and registration form can be found at www.oconee.k12.sc.us/scrabble

COME JOIN THE FUN!

Proceeds benefit students and teachers in Oconee County

Design concept: Morgan Rabke, WIS-MacCrail's Desktop Publishing

EDUCATION FOUNDATION SCRABBLE® TOURNAMENT

Mail in Registration Form to:

Education Foundation of Oconee County
Post Office Box 608
West Union, SC 29696

Name:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail Address:

Tournament will have five rounds.
Winner receives \$500.00 cash.

Walhalla High School Cafeteria
9:00 - 9:45 am Registration
10:00 am - 4:00 pm Tournament

Other Cash Prizes Awarded

\$25.00 Entry Fee
or
Preregister for \$20.00

Only \$18.00 for Students

DEADLINE for early registration is **January 23, 2012**
Preregister for only \$20.00!

ENTRY FEE BENEFITS STUDENTS!

The Education Foundation of Oconee County (EFOC) is a 501 © 3 non-profit organization that supports educational excellence in Oconee County. Our goal is to be an avenue for individuals, businesses, and community partners to provide financial and other resources to benefit students and teachers. Over the past four years, the Education Foundation has awarded over \$161,000 in grants to the teachers in the Oconee County schools.