

## OCONEE CO. ADOPTS PLAN FOR HOTEL-MOTEL TAX RECEIPTS

### *Citizen's Advisory Committee's Proposal Adopted by Commissioners*

Oconee County, GA – The Citizens' Advisory Committee for Cultural Affairs and Tourism presented the Oconee County Board of Commissioners with a recommendation for the expenditure of Hotel-Motel Tax revenues now available to Oconee County since the SpringHill Suites opened in July. Sales tax collection began with the opening of the first hotel located in unincorporated Oconee County. The hotel-motel tax rate for Oconee County is six percent.



After months of meetings, the Cultural Affairs & Tourism Committee made a recommendation to the Oconee County Board of Commissioners at its January 26, 2010 meeting. This meeting included four prioritized short-term



goals that the committee deemed most relevant expenditures to further promote tourism in Oconee County. The committee recommended that the Board of Commissioners restore the Tourism Assistant position to allow the Tourism Department to be staffed with two persons rather than one, enhance the county's tourism website, develop consistent signage within the community to promote tourism destinations, and determine if the current location for the Welcome Center is the most viable.

Committee Chair Donna Smith Fee reported, "Our committee has put a lot of effort and energy into this recommendation. After reviewing all of the facts, tourism promotion in Oconee County needs the additional staff member. When that is accomplished, we recommend pursuing the remaining items included in this prioritized recommendation as funds are available."



The Oconee County Board of Commissioners formally approved this prioritization at its February 2, 2010 regularly scheduled meeting. The Oconee County Tourism Department and the Citizens' Advisory Committee for Cultural Affairs and Tourism will work to implement the policy approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Hotel-Motel tax collections are not new to Georgia or any other tourist destination, just new to Oconee County. These funds are typically used to promote additional tourism activity within a given jurisdiction.