



November 20, 2020

Board of Directors

Darryl Broome
Blue Ridge Bank

Denise McCormick
Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative

Gloria Moore
School District of Oconee County

Nathan Farrar
Prisma Health

Darlene Greene
First Home Bank

Julie Gifford
Sea Trust Mortgage

Joey Sarkees
Technology Solutions

Annie Caggiano
Oconee Economic Alliance

Sam Dickson
Retired

Kathy Black
Retired

R. T. Harris
J Davis Construction

Don Herriott
Brews on the Alley
Xtreme Fitness

Stanley Gibson
The Farm Center

Mikayla Kreuzberger
Duke Energy, Corporate
Communications

Ken Sloan
Visit Oconee SC

Dr. Mark Dougherty
Tri-County Technical College

Dear Member,

As we prepare to say good-bye to 2020 and look forward to a new year, I want to thank you for your continued support of the Oconee County Chamber of Commerce. It has been a difficult year for many of you and it's been a difficult year for us. We were unable to host so many of our normal events providing opportunities for networking and recognitions. However, with weekly newsletters and monthly virtual meetings, we were able to maintain contact with many of you and continue to foster relationships.

The mission of the Chamber is, "To be a unified voice of business to promote growth and improvement in the economy, the community and quality of life in Oconee County." Through our involvement in a number of ventures—Women in Business, Men in Business, Coffee and Chat, and What's the Buzz—many of you have been given an opportunity to present your business to the Oconee County community. We also supported local businesses by promoting "Shop Small This Fall", and met with perspective employees at the Oconee County Job Fair.

Another important benefit to you is our continued involvement in the Oconee, Pickens, Anderson Chamber Coalition. This group is your representation on legislative issues. This year they have addressed tax reform, property tax reform, funding for broadband, criminal justice reform, and diversity and inclusion. Plans are underway now for a "Virtual Legislative Breakfast". Through this group, we were also able to make sure you had up-to-date information on filing for grants and financial aid during COVID-19. However, COVID did dominate our year and limit what we were able to accomplish. We heard from you about your concerns for the economy and your business. We, the board of directors for the chamber, held those same concerns. Our membership renewals were down and our finances have been hurt this year.

Our goal is to start fresh in 2021, and with your support and financial assistance we can have a more normal year and do all the necessary things to accomplish our mission through old and new ways of doing business. We appreciate the leadership that JoAnn Johnson has provided us during the past year. However, we've determined that we need to restructure the staffing of our office to meet the needs of our membership as best we can during COVID. Therefore, throughout the rest of this year the office will be open only for scheduled appointments. Calls will be answered, and you may contact the chamber at director@oconeecountyesc.com.

I appreciate that each of our current board members has agreed to remain in their position for an additional year. Their familiarity with our current situation and their ideas as we work anew will be invaluable. Membership fees for 2021 will be billed in early 2021. I hope you will once again join the Chamber as a member, devoted to promoting growth in Oconee County. Even if you were unable to renew your membership this year, please budget now to join us in a new year.

Should you have questions or suggestions for us, please contact Darryl or me, and let us know how we can better serve you. As the holiday season approaches, we wish each of you holidays filled with joy and a new year of peace and prosperity.

Best regards,

Denise McCormick
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