**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE OCONEE COUNTY UPON THE OCCASION OF ITS ONE HUNDRED FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY AND TO CELEBRATE ITS SPECTACULAR ASSETS AND THE NATURAL WONDERS THAT ARE UNIQUE TO THE AREA.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate are pleased to join Oconee County in celebrating its sesquicentennial in 2018. The county was formed in January 1868 from the Pickens District, with Walhalla as its county seat; and

Whereas, Oconee County is located in the northwestern corner of South Carolina, on the edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and includes five municipalities: Salem; Seneca; Walhalla; West Union; Westminster; and the unincorporated areas of Fair Play, Long Creek, Mountain Rest, Newry, Richland, and Tamassee; and

Whereas, the county takes its name from the Cherokee word “Aconnee,” meaning “land beside the water.” The area is known for its rivers, lakes, and mountains, and it has over 150 waterfalls and over 90,000 acres of protected forests. Oconee County has been recognized by several national and global publications, including CNN, *Southern Living*, and *National Geographic*, as the “Destination of a Lifetime” for its pristine natural resources; and

Whereas, popular outdoor destinations in Oconee County include Lake Hartwell, Lake Keowee, Lake Jocassee, the federally designated Wild and Scenic Chattooga River, the Sumter National Forest, the foothills of the scenic Blue Ridge Mountains, seven beautiful state and county parks, and Jocassee Gorges, which is one of only two rainforests in North America; and

Whereas, Oconee provides the perfect setting for outdoor recreation, with activities to include golfing, hiking, biking, boating, trophy fishing, diving, kayaking, sailing, paddling, and whitewater rafting; and

Whereas, boasting a vibrant cultural scene, Oconee County’s history, heritage, and natural beauty have inspired many wonderful artists and musicians, and Oconee’s calendar is dotted with festivals and events all year long. The county is also home to seven museums and twenty-two landmarks identified on the National Register of Historic Places; and

Whereas, Oconee County is blessed with economic vitality and supports its sixty industries, including a strong agricultural community, and 1,500 small businesses. Among these businesses, Oconee County offers a variety of incredible restaurants and dining experiences and a range of retail options, with national retail stores, roadside markets and farmer’s markets, and local shops and boutiques; and

Whereas, a faith-based community, Oconee County is blessed with a number of historic churches, with the oldest church in continuous use, Bethel Presbyterian Church, dating back to 1805. With the growth of the area, new churches and ministries have also flourished in Oconee; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate appreciate the pride and national recognition that Oconee County has brought to the State of South Carolina. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, congratulate Oconee County upon the occasion of its one hundred fiftieth anniversary and celebrate its spectacular assets and the natural wonders that are unique to the area.

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