

Visit Oconee

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, July 17, 2017

Weekend softball tournament fuels economic development in Oconee County

WATKINSVILLE, GA— On July 14 – 16, Oconee County hosted the fourth Annual Southern Force Summer Showdown softball tournament at Oconee Veterans Park and Herman C. Michael Park. More than 1,400 players, coaches, umpires, collegiate recruiters, and their families traveled to the area from 17 states to participate in the tournament.

The 3-day event had an estimated economic impact of \$228,000. Sport tourism has shown continued growth within the tourism industry, as participants and spectators of these sporting events bring in additional sales tax revenues to the area through local hotels, gas stations, restaurants, and more. Organized by Savvy Softball Tournaments & Clinic, the tournament is one of two softball tournaments hosted in Oconee County by the organizer.

“The facilities in our county are well-maintained and sought after by sport organizers for multi-day tournaments and events. We have hosted this tournament for all four years, and one other by this organizer during the fall season,” stated Alex Perschka, Oconee County Tourism Director.

Visitors were welcomed by the Oconee County Tourism Department, who provided maps and local information on the area, as well as complimentary fans to spectators and bottled water provided by Golden Pantry Food Stores to collegiate recruiters. Other sponsors of the department’s hospitality tent included Fox’s Pizza Den and Di’lishi Frozen Yogurt.

“It is important for us to extend our hospitality to this group, and also encourage them to see more of our community and the surrounding area while they are here. This expands the experience of these visitors beyond the tournament, while also increasing the awareness of our local tourism partners,” Perschka said.

Participants of the tournament represented states like Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, and Ohio. National sporting events provide the opportunity to showcase what the area offers tourists in hopes that these visitors will return again for leisure.

The Southern Force Fall Showcase softball tournament is expected to return in November for its 9th annual event.

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