



Relocation Guide

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IOR makes every effort to ensure that the information contained in this guide is as current as possible. If you notice errors, or information which is no longer accurate, please contact us immediately so that we may correct the issue.

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WELCOME AND OVERVIEW



[*Photo of Oconee County, SC*](#)

Oconee County is the westernmost county in the U.S. state of South Carolina. As of the 2010 census, the population was 74,273. Its county seat is Walhalla. Other cities in Oconee County are Seneca, Westminster, Salem, West Union, Long Creek, Fair Play, Mountain Rest, and Newry. Oconee County is in the Savannah River basin.

Oconee was a local Cherokee town that was situated on the main British/Cherokee trading path between Charleston and the Mississippi River in the early 18th century. Its geographic position later placed it at the intersection of the trading path and the Cherokee treaty boundary of 1777. In 1792, a frontier outpost was built by the SC State Militia near the town site and was named Oconee Station. When Oconee County was created out of the Pickens District in 1868 it was named for Oconee Town.

“Oconee” is a Cherokee word meaning “Land beside the water”. This is the perfect name for a county that boasts multiple lakes, rivers, streams, over 150 waterfalls and has one of only two rainforests in North America – the Jocassee Gorges.

Oconee County is blessed with pristine, protected forests (over 90,000 acres), primitive lakes surrounded by the Blue Ridge mountains with water falls that you can pull your boat up to and swim under, other lakes that are perfect for your favorite water sports, trails to 29 waterfalls, world class white water rafting and paddling on the infamous nationally designated Wild and Scenic Chattooga River, renown trophy fishing, lake front State and County Parks with cabins, camping and RV sites, great bicycling through canopied mountain back roads and, generally, just a great place to hang out, dip your feet in cold mountain stream and relax in the great outdoors!

Oconee County Overview

- [Official Website of Oconee County](#)
- Population: 74,273 (2010 Census)
- County Land Area: 624 square miles
- [Parks and Recreation Department](#)
- [Oconee County Public Library](#)
- [Weather Today in Oconee County](#)
- [Recycling in Oconee County](#)

History of Oconee County

- [Oconee County Heritage Center](#)

What to See, Sightseeing Tours, Value Packages and Passes, Tourist Information

- [Mountain Lake Visitors Bureau](#)
- [Visitors Guide](#)
- [Calendar of Events](#)
- [Trip Advisor Attractions in Oconee County](#)

Where to Eat

Upstate South Carolina is known for Southern cooking. No matter what your preference, you will find a complete menu of Southern fare, from barbecue and freshwater trout to sausage gravy over biscuits and the ultimate Southern favorite ... GRITS!

- [Yelp](#)
- [Local restaurant listings](#)
- [Make online restaurant reservations](#)

EMERGENCY

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY DIAL 911 FOR FIRE, POLICE & AMBULANCE

Emergency personnel will ask for the following information so keep this page close to your phone:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

If you accidentally call 911, please do not hang up. The police will automatically be dispatched to your home to make sure there are no problems. Explain to the Operator the call was an accident.

[POISON CONTROL](#) 1-800-222-1222

[ANIMAL POISON CONTROL](#) 1-888-426-4435

Other Important Numbers:

PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN _____

WORK PHONE NUMBER _____

- [Primary Care Physician](#)

Urgent Care Centers

An Urgent Care Center is different than a Hospital Emergency Room. An Emergency room would be in an absolute emergency. You may visit an Urgent Care Center if, for example, you have a terrible ear ache and need medicine immediately but your Primary Care Physician's office is closed. Many Urgent Care Centers have extended hours and are open early morning until late evening during the week and also some weekend hours. Be sure to refer back to your health insurance company to clarify which urgent care centers and primary care physicians you are allowed to visit using your health insurance. Your insurance card should have a toll-free 1-800 number on the back for you to call and ask questions and clarify which urgent care center would be closest for you. Please always carry your insurance card with you!

Hospital & Clinics

- [Oconee Medical Center, part of Navicent Health Hospital System](#)
- [AnMed Health Medical Center](#)
- [Greenville Hospital System](#)
- [Greenville Hospital System – Oconee Campus](#)
- [St. Francis Hospital \(Bon Secours\), Greenville](#)

Veterinary Clinics

- [Seneca Animal Hospital](#)
- [Crossroads Animal Hospital](#)
- [Magley Animal Hospital](#)
- [Find A Vet](#)

Pharmacies

There are several major pharmacy chains in Oconee. Click on “Store Locator” and enter your zip (postal) code to find the pharmacy near you. Check for hours of operation. Also the main grocery stores and Superstores such as Target, and Wal-Mart have full service pharmacies.

- [Walgreens](#)
- [CVS](#)
- [Rite Aid](#)
- [List of pharmacies](#)

US Leasing/Housing Guide

A lease is an agreement that outlines the obligations of the owner and the tenants of a house or apartment. It is a legally binding document, so it is important for you to know the exact terms of the lease agreement before you sign it. Please do not sign a lease without reviewing it with your IOR DS Consultant.

Rental Agents

In most situations, your IOR DS consultant will partner with a local realtor to have access to the most current and extensive property listings as well as the realtor's expertise in preparing and negotiating leases. This agent receives a commission for their assistance, in most US locations this commission is paid by the Landlord, not the tenant. Your IOR DS Consultant will discuss this with you.

Renter's Rights

Tenants who lease or rent property are protected against discrimination by [The Fair Housing Act](#). If you think your rights have been violated, you may write a letter or telephone the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) office nearest you. You have one year after the alleged violation to file a complaint with HUD, but you should file as soon as possible.

While you can generally expect the same service from landlords, it's important to know your state's laws. Each state and most major cities have their own tenant rights, laws and protections. [Here are South Carolina's](#).

You can also visit the [HUD website here for a full guide to renters' rights by states](#).

If your rental property ever suffers any defects that make your place uninhabitable, your landlord has a duty to fix it. While some apartments let you make online requests for repairs, as well as provide a phone number for "emergencies," always make sure you document your request in writing. The landlord will then have a certain amount of time to make those repairs.

Privacy

You have the right to privacy. While the landlord owns the property, they can't access it anytime they want. All states have laws stating renters have a right to privacy while renting. Pretty much the only time the landlord can come into your rental without permission or notice is when they're responding to an emergency that threatens injury or property damage.

Any other time the landlord wants to enter your apartment, they need to have your permission and in most cases give you 24-hours' notice before entering.

What to expect from the landlord:

In most states, you are legally entitled to:

- Safe structural elements including floors, walls, roofs, and secure doors and windows.
- Privacy as described above.
- All electrical, plumbing, heating, and air conditioning systems function.

- Working hot and cold water.
- Exterminating infestations of rodents and other insects.
- Access to trash receptacles.
- Landlords cannot discriminate based on race, gender, sexual orientation, or disabilities.
- Apartment buildings sometimes come with laundry and dryer machines in the basement.
- Water, electricity, and gas bills are up to you to pay. **Your IOR DS consultant will assist you with this process.**

Utilities and Appliances

Your IOR DS Consultant will assist you or provide information on connecting your utilities. It is possible some will be included in your rent, but typically most are not.

Recycling

Oconee County provides [recycling services](#) for accepted products to residents.

The Lease Process

Review your housing budget with your IOR DS Consultant

Your IOR DS Consultant can help you understand what kind of property you can afford. You also need to take into account that you may be responsible for some of the utility costs of your rental.

Know what you want

What are you looking for in a property? Do you want a studio or a single bedroom? Maybe you want to rent a single family home? Do you need the property to come with appliances, including washer and dryer? Do want it to be close to school or your work? Do you want it to be within walking distance of retail, like groceries or coffee shops? Are you looking for a child friendly area? Keep in mind that outside of the city center in major cities, there is not much public transportation and most locals drive everywhere.

Identify potential apartments

IOR offers home finding services to aid you with this process. Your consultant may work with a local broker who will help to organize appointments and visit properties. They will also assist in the rental application and the leasing process.

Common Abbreviations and Acronyms used in rental housing listings

<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
24-hr mtn	24-hour emergency maintenance	LA	Living area
AC or A/C	Air conditioning	LR	Living room
Appls	Appliances	MBR	Master bedroom

Apt	Apartment	MBTH	Master bathroom
BA	Bathroom	Neg	Negotiable
BR	Bedroom	Ofc	Office
Bsmt	Basement	OSP	Off-street parking
CAC	Central air conditioning	Pkg	Parking
DA	Dining area	PM	Property manager (management)
Det	Detached	Pvt	Private
Dk	Deck	Pwdr rm	Powder room (1/2 bath)
DR	Dining room	RE	Real estate
Dw (D/w)	Dishwasher	Renov	Renovated
Eff	Efficiency	Rf	Roof
EiK	Eat-in kitchen	Rm	Room
Fin bsmt	Finished basement	SF	Single-family
FDR	Formal dining room	SFA	Single-family attached
FHA	Fair Housing Act	SFD	Single-family detached
FMR	Fair market rent	Sp, Pl (S/p)	Swimming pool
FP	Floorplan	Sq. ft	Square feet
Gar	Garage	Th (T/H)	Townhouse
H/A	Handicapped accessible	Vw (vu)	View
H/W	Hardwood floors	W/A	Wheelchair accessible
Hi ceil	High ceilings	W/W	Wall-to-wall carpeting
HVAC	Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning		

Visit

Make this process as efficient as possible by visiting as many potential properties as you can in one or two days. Try to go sometime during the week if possible. Your IOR DS consultant will work with you to set an appropriate schedule and to ensure that the properties you visit meet your needs as closely as possible.

What to do once you're there

As you look at the rental unit, be sure to ask a lot of questions. While you should keep small concerns to yourself about the unit while looking at it, feel free to ask the landlord or apartment manager any questions you might have that will help in your decision. Here are some possible questions you may consider asking:

- What's the monthly rent?
- Are any utilities included with the rent?
- How much is the security deposit?
- When is rent due? Do you have auto-pay?
- What's the make-up of the other tenants? Are they mainly younger students? Married couples with families? Older folks?
- What's the parking situation like? Do you pay for a parking spot?
- Do you take care of small maintenance issues or am I responsible for some of the repairs in the property?
- Am I able to re-paint the walls or make other modifications?

Again, be friendly and polite when you ask these questions.

The Application

The next step in the leasing process for an apartment is to submit a rental application for the location you want. The manager or landlord will be able to give you the application as well as anything else that they may need to have filled out. Your IOR DS Consultant will assist with this process. For a single family home there will likely be a rental application.

You will need your passport, Social Security number, and proof of employment. Some landlords may charge you an application fee which could be between \$20 to \$400 dollars, depending on the landlord. This could be a combination of an application fee and move-in fee.

Once you've done this, it can take up to a few days to hear back from the property manager. Once your application has been approved the lease approval process will begin with IOR and likely your employer.

Signing the lease

DO NOT SIGN THE LEASE until your IOR DS Consultant has reviewed it in full and given their approval.

The lease is a binding contract, so it is very important to pay attention as a leasing agent goes over it with you. It is perfectly normal for you to take your time and read all the fine print for yourself. If you are working with an IOR DS Consultant, make sure to talk with them and receive approval before signing. You will also be given a copy of the lease to take with you and keep for your records, but it is very important to know everything included in your lease from the start.

Some things to look for in a lease:

- Term of the lease and any important dates such as when the rent is due.
- Extra fees for parking spaces or storage, garbage collection, and pets.

- Information regarding utility providers and whether you or the landlord is responsible for those bills.
- Notification requirements in case of renewal.
- Requirements/responsibilities of the tenants to do routine repairs such as lawn maintenance, cleaning or notification of repairs.
- Clauses that allow the landlord to change the terms of the lease after it is signed.
- Restrictions that would prevent you from living normally or comfortably in the home.

Sometimes landlords will ask for a security deposit before you sign the lease. This is normal, but you shouldn't pay in cash. Make sure all payments are made out as a check or money order just in case.

What to expect from the lease

Most leases in the United States include the following or a variation thereof:

- Your employer requires that all leases include a Break Clause in case you are transferred for work or personal needs.
- Contracts will often be for periods of a year or more.
- Minimum stay. Typically three fourths of your lease contract time. If you choose to move out before this date, you will lose your security deposit. If you move out afterwards, you are still required to give a specified number of days notice.
- Security Deposit. Landlords will expect you to leave them with a deposit (usually about one to two month's rent) that they will hold for the duration of your lease. You will receive your security deposit back at the end of the lease provided you don't break any specific clauses in your lease, such as moving out without proper notice, not paying rent, causing damages to the property, etc.
- Landlords should not be given unchecked access to your apartment. If there isn't anything in your lease about landlord's rights to enter the leased premises, suggest the following clause:

Entry by the Landlord. Landlord or his agent will not enter Tenant's home except to deal with an emergency; to make necessary or agreed repairs; to supply necessary or agreed services; or to show the unit to potential purchasers, tenants, or repair persons. Unless there is an emergency, Landlord will give Tenant at least 24 hours' written notice of the date, time, and purpose of the intended entry and will schedule entries during normal business hours, Monday–Friday.

Most landlords will be hard-pressed to say no to such a reasonable clause. If the landlord refuses, it's a sure sign that he won't be reasonable in other respects, too. Continue on in your housing search.

Moving In

On your selected move-in date, after the lease has been signed, and deposits have been paid...you should be given your keys and more than likely a move-in form to fill out. Your IOR DS Consultant will assist you with an initial walk through of your apartment. Look for dings in the walls, cracked windows, or other irregularities and report them on this form. This will indicate that these things were there before you moved in and you will not be held responsible for them at the end of the lease term.

Get Renter's Insurance

Renter's insurance covers any loss to your personal property due to robbery or accidents. It also covers any damage you might cause to other tenant's property. For example, let's say your washing machine springs a leak and water seeps through the floor and ruins your neighbor's antique dresser. Renter's insurance would cover that.

Renter's insurance will cost approximately about \$15-125 a month, less if you tack it onto another policy (like auto) you have with an insurance company. A few popular options are [Allstate](#) and [StateFarm](#).

OBTAINING A DRIVER'S LICENSE

Obtaining a Driver's License

In the US, a driver's license or ID card is issued by each individual state and not by the federal government. Since there is no national identity card in the USA, and many Americans don't have a passport or carry around a birth certificate, a driver's license issued by your state is often the only official piece of identification for many citizens. Since 9/11, you will need to show a valid driver's license or State ID card to enter many big office buildings.

Moving to South Carolina

If you have a valid driver's license or identification card from another state and permanently move to South Carolina, you must apply for an SC license or ID. You must turn in your out-of-state license or ID when you get one in this state. You have 45 days to transfer your vehicle registration to this state. See [Transferring Your Out of State Vehicle License](#) for more information.

Click [here](#) for a list of documents required to obtain a South Carolina driver's license, beginner's permit or identification card.

Countries and Territories that have Reciprocity with South Carolina listed [here](#).

Your Destination Services Consultant will also assist you with the proper procedure.

SCHOOLS IN YOUR AREA

Public Schools

- [School District-Oconee County](#)

Private Schools

There are 8 [private schools](#) in Oconee County, SC, serving 441 students.

Area Universities

- [Anderson College](#)
- [Clemson University](#)
- [Southern Wesleyan University](#)
- [University of South Carolina at Columbia](#)



Clemson University

Checking and Savings Accounts

To open a local checking or savings account you will need the following information:

- Two forms of picture identification including but not limited to your passport, driver's license or work ID.
- Social security number
- Local mailing address. You may use your office address as your mailing address, but be prepared to call your bank branch as soon as you have your permanent address.
- Letter of Employment
- Cash for the initial deposit can range from \$25-\$150 dollars.

Major U.S. Banks

Below is a list of links to some of the larger U.S. banks. Not every bank is represented in all U.S. locations; in some cases you may find that the local bank is a better option for you than some of the larger banks. Your IOR DS Consultant can help you in selecting a bank by sharing the various options available locally.

- [Bank of America](#)
- [Chase](#)
- [Citibank](#)
- [HSBC](#)
- [TD Bank](#)
- [US Bank](#)
- [List of banks in Oconee County](#)

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION/DRIVING

The county is South Carolina's northwestern-most county, situated on the Interstate 85 corridor, and is the closest South Carolina community to metro Atlanta, yet offers easy proximity to all of Upstate South Carolina, in particular the South Carolina Inland Port. Cars are the primary method of getting around Oconee County.

Bus

- [Clemson Area Transit](#) (CATbus) is a public service provided fare-free by Clemson University, the City of Clemson, the Town of Central, the Town of Pendleton, and the City of Seneca.

Train

- [Amtrak](#) offers rail service from nearby cities in South Carolina

Airports

- [Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport](#)
- [Oconee County Regional Airport](#)

Map Websites

- www.maps.google.com
- www.expedia.com
- www.mapquest.com
- www.mapblast.com

AAA Travel Protection

AAA is a membership organization that offers benefits such as roadside service and towing, discounts on car products and services, maps, reference materials, etc.

Call 1-800-352-5382 for additional information and cost. www.aaa.com

TV, Cable, Telephone, and Internet

The main service providers for TV cable, landline telephone and internet all offer combination packages. They are in stiff competition with each other, so special offers change monthly, sometimes even weekly.

- [AT&T](#)
- [Comcast](#)
- [DirecTV](#)
- [Dish](#)

Shopping

Oconee offers a variety of [specialty stores](#) in each of its cities and towns. From antiques and interior design to southern specialties and art, you'll find shops and boutiques to inspire you. Oconee's city centers also offer a number of national retail stores. Enjoy Ram Cat Alley in Seneca, antiques in Walhalla, the quaint shops of Main Street in Westminster...and the many local businesses in between.

Berries, Farm & Produce Stands

- Oconee County has many fresh options for Apples, Blueberries, Peaches, Pecans and vegetables. [Orchard and farm produce stands](#)

Dog Friendly Parks

[Oconee State Park](#) - 1165 acre park has since been a popular recreation destination offering a wide variety of water and land recreation, and an 80 mile wilderness hike. Dogs are allowed throughout the park, on the beach, and at campground; they are not allowed in the cabin areas. Dogs must be on no more than a 6 foot leash and cleaned up after.

Veterinary Clinics

- [Seneca Animal Hospital](#)
- [Crossroads Animal Hospital](#)
- [Magley Animal Hospital](#)
- [Find A Vet](#)

Adopt a pet from [Oconee County Humane Society](#).



Oconee State Park

RECREATION

The rugged terrain of the Blue Ridge Mountains offers the perfect setting for many outdoor activities. Hiking, camping, bird-watching and mountain biking are just a few of the activities enjoyed by residents and visitors to the area. Rivers support rafting, tubing, kayaking and fishing, and there are always leisurely walks available for nature lovers.

The hilly landscape has created a haven for man-made lakes. Three large man-made lakes provide residents with sport fishing, water skiing, and sailing as well as hydroelectric power. The largest lake is [Lake Hartwell](#), built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers between 1955 and 1963. [Lake Keowee](#) is the second largest lake, and [Lake Jocassee](#) is the third largest and is a source of hydroelectric energy, but is also popular for its breathtaking scenery and numerous waterfalls.

The [Sumter National Forest](#) includes approximately 2,859 acres of the Ellicott Rock Wilderness, the only wilderness to straddle three states (South Carolina, Georgia, and North Carolina). The Sumter also has, as its western border, the Chattooga River, a Wild and Scenic River.

Recommended activities

- [The South Carolina Botanical Garden](#) is a diverse 295 acres of natural landscapes, display gardens, and miles of streams and nature trails.
- [Chattooga River](#)
- [Oconee County Trails](#)
- [Foothills Trail](#)
- [13 Hiking Trails](#)



Foothills Access Trail in Oconee State Park

Volunteer Opportunities

- [Volunteer Match](#)
- [United Way](#)
- [Crossroads Animal Rescue](#) - the non-profit organization of Crossroads Animal Hospital in Seneca, SC. Their goal is to decrease pet euthanasia rates in Oconee County, rescuing dogs, cats and horses.

Parent & Children Resources

- [Mom's Clubs](#) - social groups offering events and outings with mothers and their young children.

Smart Phone Apps for Travel:

- [Uber](#) : Similar to a taxi service but all web based. Payment also handled online, do not pay or tip driver directly. Uber driver knows your approximate location based on your phone GPS.
- [Lyft](#) : Wherever you're headed, count on Lyft for rides in minutes. The Lyft app matches you with local drivers at the tap of a button. Just request and go.
- [Apple Maps](#) : Map by direction
- [Map Quest](#) : Map by direction
- [Waze](#) : Community based traffic & navigation with alternate route suggestions
- [CityMaps2Go](#) : The #1 travel app lets you discover exciting new places. Beautiful photos and insider tips at the touch of a button. You will receive stories about places you like and can instantly save and find them on your maps and in your lists.

Smart Phone Apps for Communication:

- [WhatsApp](#) : Free local & international Real Time messaging
- [Line](#) : Exchange free instant messages with friends whenever and wherever with one-on-one and group chats. LINE is available on all smartphone devices (iPhone, Android, Windows Phone, Blackberry, Nokia) and even on your PC.
- [Viber](#) : Free text, calling, photo messages and location-sharing with Viber users. No registration, alias or invitations required. Instantly integrates with your own contact list. Best-quality mobile calls using 3G or Wi-Fi.
- [Skype](#) : Stay in touch with your family and friends for free on Skype. Download Skype today to chat and call on desktop and mobile.

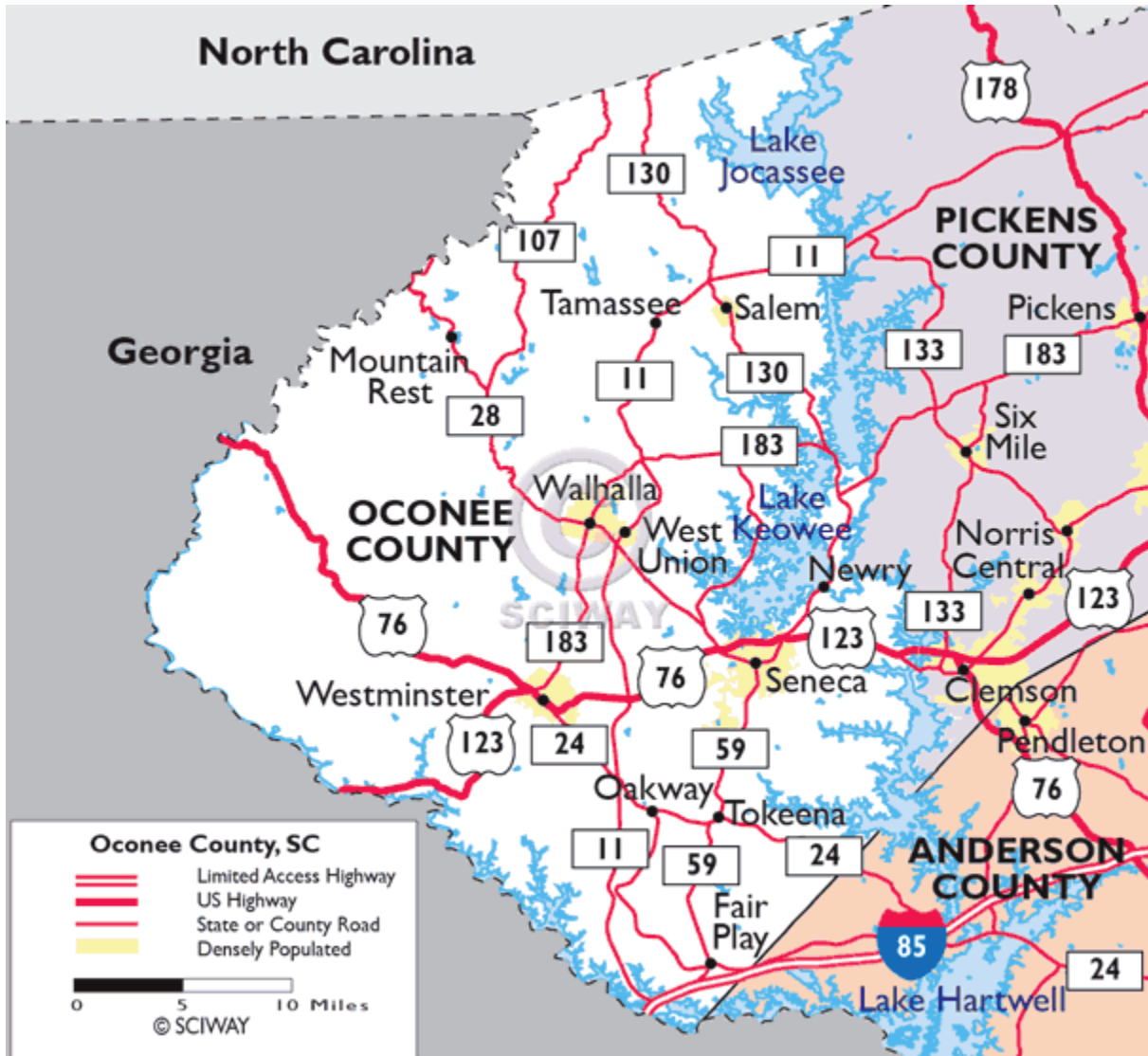
Smart Phone Apps for Local Information/Reviews:

- [Angie's List](#) : Referrals for doctor, dentist, child care, maid, mechanic, painter, plumber, etc.
- [Yelp!](#) : Find local businesses, restaurants, bars, clubs, events, etc. with map, lists, and reviews
- [Next Door](#) : Neighbors share community events, items for sale, recommendations for babysitters, doctors and handymen, crime reports, ideas about how to improve their neighborhood and more.

- [Meet Ups](#) : Meetups are neighbors getting together to learn something, do something or share something. Cultural groups advertise gatherings here as well.

Smart Phone Apps for Weather:

- [Weather Channel](#) : National and international time, temperature & weather
- [Tornado](#) : Set up tornado alerts & siren



Map of Oconee County, SC

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

[Federal Holidays listed through 2020](#)

The following are legal holidays in South Carolina and need to be treated as such by employers:

- New Year's Day January 1*
- Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday January 21
- Good Friday March 29
- Memorial Day Last Monday in May
- Independence Day July 4*
- Labor Day First Monday in September
- Veterans' Day November 11*
- Thanksgiving Day Fourth Thursday in November
- Christmas Day December 25*

*If a holiday falls on a Sunday, the day following is observed as the legal holiday.