SCSU prepping for Biden's visit

"Unforgettable event" planned for Friday
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The Times and Democrat

It is not every day the president of the United States stops by for a visit.

South Carolina State University is making sure all the details are taken care of for President Joe Biden’s visit on Friday morning. Here’s a look at SCSU’s State’s Graduates.

Security will be tight around the city and on campus during the president’s visit.

“We are indeed steeped in security and working with the Secret Service to secure the campus,” S.C. State spokesman Sam Watson said. “Certain areas on and around the campus will be inaccessible to the public.”

“Campus access will be limited to the South Carolina State gate, and no backpacks and personal belongings will be allowed on the campus,” Watson said.

“there will be metal detectors and other screening technology involved.”

Watson said a public advisory will be sent out regarding the details closer to the president’s visit.

Traffic flow around and near campus will also most likely be adjusted. Details about how traffic will be affected are pending, Watson said.

Because the president is expected to arrive just before and depart right after graduation ceremonies, SCSU plans to keep the campus shut down and only ticket holders and official guests will be allowed on the campus,” Watson said. Watson said “If the work has been done by our facilities management and public safety teams.”

“The process has necessitated the solicitation of athletic practices and games, adjustments to the commencement program, changes to the layout of Smith-Hamilton-Middleton Memorial Center, and coordination between various departments,” Watson said.

“The White House advance team has been extremely involved and accommodating in guiding us through the requirements and staffing for President Biden’s visit,” Watson continued.

“We want to make this an unforgettable event for our graduates and their families. They have persevered through the COVID-19 pandemic and other challenges to make this possible,” President Biden’s willingness to give them his time and attention is greatly appreciated.

Outside of security, Watson said the university is preparing to spring up its grounds.

“The campus grounds crew and horticulture staff are working diligently since last week to prepare for graduation,” he said.

Orangeburg County Administrations Harold Young said the county is ready to assist the city, S.C. State and the Secret Service with any security needs. SCSU is expected to host at least 600 guests and ticket holders on campus for the ceremonies. The sheriff’s office and emergency services have been notified and are ready to help when called upon to do so.

“We will fully support South Carolina State University and President Biden’s visit,” Young said. “We are thrilled to have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity being willing to work with them.”

Young noted Biden’s visit to a big deal.

“Thankfully, the president saw fit to come to Orangeburg County and be a part of the graduation ceremonies,” Young said. “Any time a national leader comes to the county, it puts a spotlight on us and we are taking advantage of that as we try to recruit industries and individuals to call Orangeburg County their home.”

Gen Zaleski

T&D Staff Writer

Tri-County Electric Cooperative has been working on broadband projects in Elloree, Vance and Eutawville for several years now, but the project in Elloree is expected to be finished by June 2022.

The electric cooperative is in the midst of a $16 million project to provide internet access to those who do not have access if they are within the coverage area. About $10 million of that will be spent in Orangeburg County.

Orangeburg County Council Monday gave first reading to a fee-in-lieu of taxes agreement with the cooperative for the project. It also passed a resolution relative to the incentives.

The 30-year agreement allows the co-op to pay a reduced, 9% tax rate on the project’s property taxes. Business properties typically pay a 10.5% assessment.

New jobs are associated with the project.

The cooperatives started the project in 2019 and expects it to be finished by June 2022. The fiber network is currently under construction in Elloree, and then will move into the Vance and Eutawville areas, according to cooperative officials.

The cooperation has a total of 18,000 miles and is helping to bring broadband internet to those who are currently without.