August opening for Hampton Inn?

BY NORMAN CANNADA
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — While rainy weather in the first part of 2013 has put the project about three weeks behind schedule, officials with the new Seneca Hampton Inn and Suites say they are hopeful the hotel will open on time.

"As of right now, we're still shooting for Aug. 27," said Mark Welch, who was recently named the general manager of the Seneca hotel. "It's coming along nicely out there, so we're hoping for some nice weather to keep us moving."

Weather – specifically rain – has been the project's biggest enemy in the last few months. Welch said the work is about three weeks behind, but he hopes to catch up with good weather and as the project moves inside the building.

"They're still working on the outside," he said. "Once they get everything closed off that should help us move along a bit faster. Until the outside is completed, the biggest obstacle is the weather."

When plans for the hotel were announced last fall, developer Sanjay Desai said he hoped to be open in time for Clemson University's first home football game in 2013. That game is set for Aug. 31 against Georgia.

Welch said people are already calling to reserve hotel rooms, but they would not start making reservations until about four weeks before the hotel opens.

SEE INN, PAGE A5



JESSICA NELMS | THE JOURNAL

Construction workers are busy trying to catch up on the work on the new Hampton Inn and Suites in Seneca. Rains earlier this year slowed down the work on the hotel, but officials are hopeful of opening in late August.

INN: 'I am definitely looking forward to



Officials are optimistic the new Hampton Inn and Suites in Seneca will be open in time for the first Clemson home football game against Georgia on Aug. 31.

FROM PAGE A1

"We have some groups and some individuals whose names we have taken down for football games, fall weddings, things of that nature," he said. "But, we haven't officially booked anyone yet. It's all on paper right now, not in our (computer) system. There's a lot of dangers with booking reservations and not being able to fulfill that promise of rooms if for some reason we do fall behind."

The 100-room hotel, located near S.C. Highway 130 and U.S. Highways 123/76 on the east end of Seneca, will include 33 suites and a meeting room that will seat 40 to 50. Officials have said they expect to employ 38 people. The $10 million to $12 million hotel project was aided with $1 million each from the city of Seneca and Oconee County with the developer providing the rest of the funding.

Welch, who worked in marketing and promotions at Clemson University prior to going into the hotel business, has been the assistant general manager at the Hampton Inn in Clemson since August.

"I am definitely looking forward to the challenge," he said. "You don't really know what you can accomplish until you are pushed to do something."

Desai said he believes Welch is ready his new assignment.

"He's been with me for close to two years now, learning the ins and outs of the hotel business," he said. "With me being by his side to walk him through day-to-day activities, I think we're going to be wonderful."



JESSICA NELMS | THE JOURNAL

ncannada@upstatetoday.com | (864) 973-6684
Follow on Twitter @NormCannada