

# Professional golf to return to Oconee

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WALHALLA — After an eight-year absence, professional golf is returning to Oconee County.



Shirley

County Council approved this week the use of \$5,000 from local Accommodations Tax (ATAX) money that would allow Oconee to be the title sponsor for a National Golf Association tournament at Cross Creek Plantation in Seneca.

Phil Shirley, Oconee's Parks, Recreation and Tourism director, said he would like to see the NGA event in the county every

year.

Shirley said the NGA is a pathway to the PGA for many golfers.

"This is a big deal for players trying to get into the PGA Tour," Shirley said. "This even has the opportunity to bring a great deal of money into the county."

The 72-hole tournament is scheduled to begin April 18 and could attract 156 players, their caddies and family members that could have an economic impact of more than \$250,000 over a five-day period, Shirley said.

Oconee has not had a professional golf event since 2004.

"We want to get it here every year," Shirley said.

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