

# New hotel coming to Seneca

BY GREG OLIVER  
THE JOURNAL

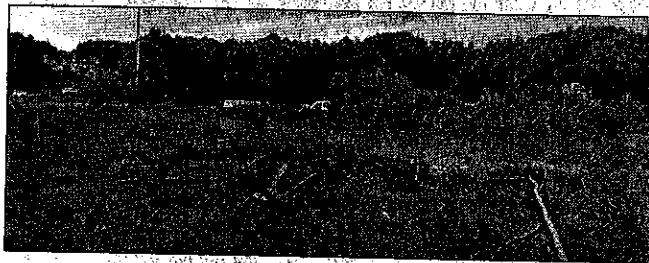
SENECA — Grading is now taking place for a new four-floor Marriott Fairfield Inn and Suites next to Applebee's on U.S. Highway 123 in Seneca.

The hotel is set to include 102 rooms and 1,300 square feet of event/meeting space.

Developer Raj Patel, who has developed several hotels in Clemson, said the Seneca Marriott will feature 57,000 square feet overall with a bar inside and a large deck, outdoor pool and outside bar. He projects the new hotel to open in January 2020 "if everything goes right."

"This is the first one in Seneca," Patel said of his latest venture. "It started with (former Oconee Alliance executive director) Richard Blackwell understanding the competitive market and the competitive direction Oconee County is going in the future."

Patel said there is a need for meeting space and amenities in Oconee County. When asked about the cost of the hotel, Patel said an \$8.3 million permit has been pulled. He said the new hotel represents only the first phase of the project, with Phase II including plans



SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

**Work is underway to prepare the site of a new hotel set to be built on U.S. Highway 123 in Seneca.**

meeting with city officials was held recently.

"We're excited about that development kicking off," Moulder said. "He has started clearing and grading on the site. He has met with staff on a couple of occasions. He has met with the Department of Utilities about his utility needs. He's met with planning about his conceptual design and what's going to be required for his permit. He's conducting his preliminary work."

for a full restaurant and retail, as well as eight to 10 small, high-end condos. "Phase II will be in a separate building from the hotel," Patel said.

When asked what made him want to choose Seneca for this particular project, Patel said it was the vision of Oconee County to have a nice, quality hotel to enable developers to focus on industries.

"To have more industries is how other counties have been successful, like Spartanburg and

Greenville," he said. "For Oconee County to be successful, the vision has to be growth of industries. When industries come, the population will grow and amenities will come." Patel said the city of Seneca "has been a pleasure to work with."

"The city has been very cooperative in the design of this project," Patel said. Seneca city administrator Scott Moulder said Patel has not submitted an application for permits yet, but that a preconstruction

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