



SAVANNAH BLAKE | THE JOURNAL

The new owners of the Best Western, Tejal Patel and her husband, Mehul Patel, pose for a portrait with employees, friends and community members during the ribbon cutting Tuesday morning.

# Best Western celebrates new ownership

**BY NORM CANNADA**  
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SENECA — The Best Western Seneca celebrated a recent change in ownership with a ribbon cutting Tuesday at the hotel on U.S. Highway 123.

But the new owners are not new to Seneca or the hotel business.

Mehul and Tejal Patel have lived in Oconee County for the past seven years and own the Days Inn by Wyndham Seneca.

The couple has two small children and became owners of the Best Western about two months ago.

“Everything is in great condition. The rooms were just recently renovated, the hotel was renovated last year,” Tejal said. “We have just added our own little touch and kind of jazzed it up just a little bit. We want to let everybody know it’s under new ownership. We’re very excited. I come from a family of hotels. This is our first interior hotel.

It’s a huge, huge milestone for me. It’s a big deal.”

The Patels said they believe Seneca is a good location to operate a hotel.

“We’re so lucky,” Tejal said. “We’re in between three lakes and the mountains. There’s so much whitewater rafting, and it’s close to Clemson University. The football team is amazing. I think we’re in the middle of such a robust area. Seneca is just booming right now. I know seven years ago, you could tell

the activity was picking up, but not quite as much.”

Her husband said the area is a good location to grow the business.

“It’s been getting bigger and bigger in the years we’ve been here,” Mehul said. “We’re hoping we will expand in the future, but at the same time we want to make sure tourism expands. That’s what I’m hoping for right now.”

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# OWNERSHIP: 'We want to make them feel like they're home'

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He added the couple is bringing years of experience to the hotel.

"We've been in the hospitality business for a very, very long time," he said. "We are bringing our knowledge here. We are a family business. When people stay here, they get a family experience. They feel safe staying in our hotel and they're comfortable. We want to make them feel like they're home."

Seneca Mayor Dan

Alexander was among the city and business leaders participating in the ribbon cutting.

"I'm excited to see the new ownership," he said. "They are very excited about what's happening in Seneca and all the events that are going on. They feel good about our community. It's a great place for them to own a business and family, so for them

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