

and clothe the poor and homeless, provide or enhance recreational areas such as parks and playgrounds and provide for the elderly.

A goal of raising \$50 million in 10 years for education in the area was set in 2011. Three years away from that timetable, \$45 million has been raised.

With the establishment of the World Golf Foundation in 1997 came the World Golf Hall of Fame (and its two golf courses) and The First Tee, which has exposed more than 5.3 million youth and children to golf.

The Players brings international exposure unlike any other event on the First Coast, with a global TV audience of more than 1 billion households in 226 countries, according to the Tour.

Earlier this year, the Tour announced plans to invest \$81 million in its new headquarters building along State Road 210 near the TPC Sawgrass, with plans to add 300 more jobs that would swell the work force of the Tour staff to more than 1,200.

According to Florida's First Coast of Golf, a marketing company that promotes North Florida as a golf destination, tourism related to golf brought more than \$142 million to the area in 2017, with 93,316 visitors who stayed an average of 5.9 nights and played more than 550,000 rounds.

Tourism, according to FFCG, accounts for more than 80,000 jobs on the First Coast.

Executive director Dave Reese said it wouldn't have been possible without the PGA Tour coming to the First Coast in 1918, and then coming to stay in 1965.

"It's a tremendous home-field advantage for us," he said. "Having the PGA Tour headquarters, The Players, the TPC Sawgrass, the World Golf Hall of Fame is vital to our marketing on a global scale. It puts a lot of wind in our sails."

The wind is still strong as estimated crowds of more than 200,000 are expected this week for the 45th Players Championship -- and the beginning of the second hundred years of touring golf on the First Coast.

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