Amick suggests 18 ways to save on course

Golf course architect William Amick of Daytona Beach, Fla., lists 18 ways to save money building a course.

Amick, a member of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, suggests that a developer:

1) Lease land for a course on a long-term basis from a government agency, with terms that include leasing to a private land owner, or receive the land free from a developer who wants fairway frontage without operating a golf course. "Any of these methods could substantially reduce startup costs," Amick says. "Developers should seriously consider giving enough land to an individual or group to build and operate a course. Government developers have to contend with high interest payments and land costs. And if you charge a nickel more for a cup of coffee, the public estate. And he and others in the industry expect that trend to continue, yet they also see increases in numbers of privately owned and municipal public courses.

"We're looking at several projects right now where a real-estate developer is donating land for a golf course to be built within their housing development," said Michael Dye, president of the Golf Course Builders Association and of Dye Designs, Inc., said, "We have seen some things in the last four or five years that have changed a lot of minds about whether a golf course (not linked to real estate development) is worth the money. We see a lot of players taking a real estate developer's course as a way to get into golf again.

Rossi points out that around 90 percent of the courses being built today are tied to real estate developments. They have a high standard of maintenance, but it's often a question of whether the developer can afford to maintain the course to a high standard. "The municipalities pay for it and they get the course," he says. "It's a good deal for them because they don't have to pay for maintenance.

Rossi of the Builders Association said, "Savings and loans went through a period of excess financing. They have a high standard of maintenance, but it's often a question of whether the developer can afford to maintain the course to a high standard. "The municipalities pay for it and they get the course," he says. "It's a good deal for them because they don't have to pay for maintenance.

"We're seeing more and more private clubs interested in this type of facility... Jones Creek Golf Course, designed by Rees Jones in Augusta, Ga., operates on an upscale public course basis and is a wonderful and successful course."

"We'seeing more and more private clubs interested in this type of facility... Jones Creek Golf Course, designed by Rees Jones in Augusta, Ga., operates on an upscale public course basis and is a wonderful and successful course."

"We're seeing more and more private clubs interested in this type of facility... Jones Creek Golf Course, designed by Rees Jones in Augusta, Ga., operates on an upscale public course basis and is a wonderful and successful course."

"We're seeing more and more private clubs interested in this type of facility... Jones Creek Golf Course, designed by Rees Jones in Augusta, Ga., operates on an upscale public course basis and is a wonderful and successful course."

Rossi warns would-be developers that many variables decide whether a course will be a success.

"Location, condition, the critical factor is, "Rossi said. "Are you going to have a 12-month season or a nine-month season?" he asked. "Obviously, in the South you have a better chance of making it... That is also why so many ski areas are adding golf courses, so they will have a source of income the year round."

"You must also consider the weather," Rossi said. "In Hawaii they can stay open every day of the year. But in some of the country how many months can people play?"

"This is also a reason so many ski areas are building golf courses — to be able to make money 12 months a year to pay the bills."

"And when looking at NGF figures claiming the need for a new golf course a day for the next 20 years, Dye said, "I don't know of any industry that can double its volume overnight. We may never reach the point where we've saturated the market with overbuilding, and that's pretty unbelievable."