Critical issues aired at Golf Summit

The month of November was a big one for the golf course industry. As you see on our front page, there is some news coming from the third annual John Deere Team Championship. As reported last month, this event teams a PGA club professional with the superintendent and two other board members ideally the club president and general manager) from the facility. Great camaraderie is developed in the teams and ideally a better working relationship back home. I did have a chance to play a few desert courses. Most memorable was the Nicklaus Desert Course. I feel it is a fair test for a 18 or under handicap.

The course is in great condition, and I even made a birdie on the #1 handicap hole (#19).

Golf continues to flourish. As we heard at the summit, some real estate developments created by golfers may be hurt because of the down economy.

However, established facilities and stand-alone courses will continue to attract new players and grow even stronger in the coming year.

Best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season!

Sincerely,
Charles E. von Brecht
Publisher

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Golf course solution, not the problem

BY FRED JARVIS

The prevalent no-growth attitude of the NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) has been sweeping across the United States. And now, we’ve seen NIMBY’s being replaced by the NOPE’s (Not On Planet Earth).

The public has become frustrated in recent years by the negative side of development — from a lack of balanced growth to an absence of government leadership, low-density single-use zoning patterns and traffic congestion.

There are no easy solutions to the suburban growth dilemma. But the recent resurgence in the game of golf has suggested at least one viable growth alternative to growth — golf course communities.

Many consider a golf course to be the ultimate community amenity. And communities developed around them possess desirable characteristics that counter the arguments of growth opponents.

Golf course communities:

- foster cluster and mixed-use planning concepts;
- provide substantial areas of permanently protected open space;
- are normally controlled by less stringent development controls; and
- create positive community and fiscal impact.
Farmers Marketing deserves credit

To the Editor:

We appreciate your coverage of New Mexico State University's royalty agreement for seed propagated NaMex Sahara bermudagrass in your October issue.

However, it has come to our attention that Farmers Marketing Corp., which paid us the royalty, and which assumed responsibility for increasing the seed under genetically pure conditions, was eliminated from the article.

We are well aware of publications' continuous battle with space limitations. But we feel Farmers Marketing Corp., should receive credit for its work in releasing NaMex Sahara a commercially viable bermudagrass.

Sincerely,
Beth Morgan
Information Specialist
New Mexico State University

Golf communities

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It should be noted, however, that community and citizen involvement in an open, responsive planning process is essential to gain support and approval.

Cluster and mixed-use plans

Golf course communities, using clustered development principles are an increasingly popular alternative to standard, single-family, detached residential developments. The high percentage of open space creates an attractive residential environment.

Clustered concepts can often accommodate much greater density than allowed under larger-lot, conventional zoning, in a manner that is sensitive to the site environment and natural features. Clustering creates a perception of lower density.

In a golf course community of 500 acres or more, retail, employment, civic and additional recreational uses can be provided, creating truly mixed-use development. This gets workers closer to jobs and shopping and recreation areas.

Protected open space

By combining a golf course's 100 to 200 acres with cluster planning principles, substantial areas of permanent open space are established. Natural site features are preserved and recreational amenities provided.

In many cases, 40 to 50 percent of a site can be preserved as permanent open space.

Contrary to popular opinion, golf courses developed under today's stringent federal and local regulations are environmentally sensitive. Golf courses can also be important components of a community's storm-water management system, using portions of fairways as detention areas.

More stringent controls

Most golf course communities are developed under special Planned Golf Course Community Ordinances. They are generally modeled after Planned Unit Development or Planned Residential Development ordinances containing many similar provisions. The ordinances allow flexibility in site layout and design, but require high standards in implementation.

Typical provisions of a golf course community ordinance might include substantial open space and landscaping requirements, buffering of adjacent properties through extensive perimeter setbacks, and strict architectural design controls.

Positive community impact

Comparing a golf course community to development of a property under conventional zoning almost always favors the golf course approach. In many cases, the difference is striking.

A conventional subdivision usually produces more school-age children and more traffic than a comparable golf course community. Off-site traffic can be further reduced by incorporating mixed-use/land-use concepts.

In most cases, a golf course community will produce significant long-term benefits and a positive tax impact as well as being a source of continuing pride for the local citizens.

Frederick Jarvis is principal, co-founder and director of planning for LDR International Inc., a planning consultancy and landscape architecture firm. Copies of the growth cartoons can be obtained by contacting Jarvis at LDR International Inc., Quarry Park Place, Suite 100, 9175 Gulf Road, Columbia, Md. 21046-2566.

Comment

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... one more speaker at the summit said, "We're the environmentists. Really? Then let's prove it.

There certainly are enough environmental groups around the country. How about joining, then giving us your expertise, time and finances?

Also, if you're a superintendent, contractor or other industry member and you're doing things right on the job site, let the public know it. All regulatory board meetings are open to the public.

If they say "earshot," they'll hear you. If they don't, they're a lost cause anyhow.

Let us know if you find a board meeting held behind closed doors and not allowing open-session discussion of public issues.

Likewise, speakers are always being sought by civic organizations — such as the Kiwanis and Rotary clubs — and school systems holding career days or similar events.

Make yourself available.

Meanwhile, as architect Michael Hurdan told the summit crowd: "Not every site is a golf course site. In that case the decision-maker in the industry should decide not to build there.

Crampton told the business leaders, get it together, or you can "fight history and go through the same kinds of problems the chemical, steel and other industries went through before they realized they had to get with the program."