String of 54-hole resorts foreseen in Ala.

Jones, Vaughan, ex-pro add expertise to state Retirement System plan for developments

Alabama is ranked 48th in the nation in public golf facilities. A key foursome hope to rocket the state from the bottom to near the top in 18 months via a string of 54-hole golf resorts running the length of the state.

Courses are under construction in Birmingham, Huntsville, Auburn-Opelika and Mobile, and two more are about set for launch.

Dr. David Bronner, chief executive officer of the Retirement Systems of Alabama, architect Robert Trent Jones, Bobby Vaughan, former director of golf at Tanglewood resort in Clemmons, N.C., and Bob Barrett, former pro at Shoal Creek, Birmingham, are the driving forces behind the courses to be marketed as the Robert Trent Jones Trail of Golf.

Barrett said, "A major course usually is on the board for 2-1/2 to three years, and in construction three more. We're doing it in 18 months, spending $10 million to $12 million at each site."

Retirement Systems is providing the financing.

Vaughan claimed Alabama has 10 percent of the country's natural resources, a perfect climate for golf and great interest in the sport.

Bronner added that most people don't understand that tourism is Alabama's No. 1 industry, and think it is a drive-through state for people on the way to Florida.

"If we expand our attractions, they might stay in Alabama four or five nights," he theorized.

Country Club
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Courses unite in tee-time project around Ocean City

OCEAN CITY, Md. — The computer and four new golf courses in the Ocean City area are making a neat match.

A call to 1-800-4OC-Golf can book the golfer into a convenient tee time, probably at the course he most wants to play.

Letting the fingers do the walking beats early-morning dashes to a course usually jammed in the vicinity of the first tee.

The Beach Club Golf Links on Deer Park course started the ball rolling. River Run followed. Architect Gary Player conducted a clinic and played a round with sponsors and contest winners.

Eagle's Landing on Eagle Nest Golf Club with Tour pro Craig Stadler featured in a clinic and 18-hole exhibition.

The Landing layout perhaps should be known as "The Splash." Sixteen of the 18 holes have water.

The new Bay Club on Libertytown Road completes the new course foursome.

Inside-Out features tiered tees, video on 55-acre site

FISHERS, Ind. — Tim Teague's new Golf Inside-Out complex is in the middle of rapidly expanding golf country.

The proposed Hamilton Proper development, which will include a golf course, is a mile south; Joe Taylor's Stone Creek Golf Course is less than five miles north; and the new Britton Golf Club a few miles west.

Two miles north, a Gary Player course is scheduled to open within the next two years.

Teague's 55 acres includes three acres of bentgrass tee box, 50 yards wide and three football fields long. The two-tiered tee area can accommodate 120 players at the same time.

They hit to greens with flags on them at varying distances, from a wedge shot to a full driver.

The teaching complex includes a 15,000-square-foot practice greens surrounded by sand bunkers. Another 7,500-square-foot practice is for putting.

Swings can be captured on video-tape, played back and analyzed on the GofTek computer system.

A nine-hole, par 3 course adjacent to the teaching area is expected to open next spring.