NGF reveals regions needing courses

JUPITER, Fla. — Warning would-be investors to get additional marketing studies done before starting any project, the National Golf Foundation has reported its annual list of "Hot Spots for Public Golf Course Development in the United States." "This list is only a beginning, not a conclusion," said NGF President Joe Beditz, "but it names the first places I'd consider if I were going to invest my own money in the golf course business." The NGF is emphasizing public golf course development because golf in the United States has the most—reflecting its popularity among both players and golfers. Next are Florida, Georgia, New York, and Virginia, each with five counties listed.

The NGF has expanded its methods of identifying more exactly where courses are likely to be needed. Researchers analyzed income and age demographics, population density, population growth and migration patterns. These factors were compared with golf facilities existing, in planning or under construction. "Actual investment decisions would require additional study of specific market conditions, site constraints, environmental permitting, land costs, availability of financing and other potential limitations," said Nick Norton, who heads NGF Consulting directed the analysis.

The NGF is emphasizing public golf course development because golf in the United States is predominantly a public game. More than 70 percent of the nearly 500 million rounds played annually are recorded at public facilities.