NGF study compares maintenance budgets

By Mark Leslie

JUPITER, Fla. — Golf course superintendents, often asked to "perform magic with the same old things," may find artilleri for their budget struggles in a new National Golf Foundation report, according to its project manager.

"A lot of superintendents get hammered pretty heavily because they are in charge of the biggest expense on a golf course," said Jerry Hinckley, who coordinated the report, Understanding and Comparing Maintenance Budgets. "Member committees and various people are constantly demanding more, yet aren't always willing to pay for it. They want the conditions they see on TV, and their expectations are very high."

Dividing the country into four regions and showing acreages and budgets at actual courses, the report demonstrates the relationship between expenditure and the number of acres maintained.

Most golf courses, Hinckley said, are "investing heavily in improvements and new equipment every year. If you decide not to put any money back into the facility, above and beyond the basic maintenance, you're actually slipping back."

A panel of eight highly qualified golf course agronomists surveyed a

Dyes take their act downtown

By Mark Leslie

CHICAGO — People stuck in congested, downtown Chicago with a mere 90 minutes on their hands will soon have a chance to play nine famous par-3s from the Family Dye.

The Vintage Group, formed by ex-Dye Equities president Charles Tourtellotte, is in the midst of developing a one-of-a-kind golf facility on a tiny bit of property that used to be the Illinois Central Railroad yards. Come next spring, golfers can walk through the underground pedway that connects all of the office buildings and hotels in the area, take the elevator to the clubhouse and tee off at the Illinois Golf Center — a mere long drive or two from Chicago River and Lake Michigan.

Tourtellotte hired the Denver-based Perry Dye to design a nine-hole par-3 course because "Perry has a reputation for being able to work with small sites."

Tourtellotte has leased the 30-acre plot for 15 years from Metropolitan Structures and the Whitman Corp., the partnership that owns and manages Illinois Center.

More pump manufacturers join forces

Flowtronex, PSI merge; Childers the lone holdout

Carroll Childers, who formed PSI in the early 1970s before leaving to create his current company, said the merger "comes as no surprise as there have been numerous such mergers and also closings of pump station manufacturers in recent years due largely to overpopulatation in the industry and to downturn in

Ex-Landmark employees re-emerge

By Peter Blais

LAS VEGAS, Nevada — A proposed 72-hole golf resort on the Paiute Indian Reservation is among several major projects being developed by newly formed Landmark Golf Co.

Several former Landmark Land Co. executives teamed up earlier this summer to form Landmark Golf. The limited liability corporation offers design, golf operation and real estate development expertise. The firm already has offices in Palm Desert, Calif., and Scottsdale, Ariz.

In addition to the Las Vegas venture, the firm has

Lake Michigan and skyscrapers frame the Family Dye's par-3 and practice-range project in Chicago.
irrigation systems at the other facilities to optimize performances where it makes sense," Schmidt said. "You can maximize profits right away by just taking money out of a course and putting nothing back in. That works well for about 2-1/2 years. You don't notice too much the first year. Then the second everything starts falling apart until nothing is left."

"We believe in optimizing. It doesn't maximize your return in the short term. But it makes the product better each year and allows the owner to make more profit for a longer time."

While it prefers ownership and lease arrangements, the company has not forsaken the management-only market. Kemper has management contracts at Vernon Hills (Ill.) Golf Course as well as Pipestone and Mound Golf Course, both in Miamisburg, Ohio. "We strongly believe in giving the golfer value for his dollar. Kemper Lakes greens fees are $95 and Vernon Hills $10. Both are full all the time. That's because we provide value for both types of golfer. We take a lot of pride in that."

Kemper's mission, Schmidt said, is one of providing quality, not quantity. The company plans to acquire two to four courses per year. "That's a reasonable number we can absorb in a quality manner," the company president said. "We're excited about the opportunities out there. But we'll only do things that make sense."

Making those judgments will be an experienced management staff. Chairman of the Board James Kemper is former chairman of the board of Kemper Group. He founded Kemper Lakes and oversees major policy decisions. Chief Executive Officer Steven Lesniak has 25 years experience in communications, marketing and sports management.

Before founding Kemper Sports in 1978, he was vice president of Kemper Group. Other key personnel include Schmidt, vice presidents Ben Brundford, Tom Lenz and Robert Wallace, Chief Financial Officer Bradley Stake, Marketing Manager Jeff Hunt and Director of Golf Bob Spence.

Landmark re-emerges

Continued from page 1

a 36-hole development planned across the street from the TPC at Scottsdale, an 18-hole public layout under consideration in Indio, Calif., and an 18-course沿线 the coast of Chile scheduled to begin construction later this year.

"Development has slowed across the country. But considering how difficult things have been since the late 1980s, we're doing pretty well," said Brian Curley, former director of golf course design construction for Landmark, Sonoma Courses and a partner in the new firm.

Construction should begin early 1994 on the first 36 holes at Snow Mountain Resort, located on 3,800 acres of Plateau land 12 miles north of Las Vegas. All four courses should be completed within two years, according to former PGA Tour player Johnny Pott, a Landmark partner and project supervisor.

Pete Dye, Pott and Curley are combining to design the courses, which will cost about $7 million piece. A single clubhouse will serve all 72 holes. The entire golf project is pegged at $40 million. Casinos, hotels and residential areas are also planned.

"There are definite advantages to working with Indian land," Curley said. "There is no land cost. They have very well-established water rights. You only have to deal with federal agencies and there are no taxes. Imagine all those benefits on a site just 12 miles from downtown."

Despite its proximity to Las Vegas, the Paiutes originally planned not to have gambling at the resort. That restricted the type and amount of financing to a bond issue or traditional financing. Curley said the tribal council now plans casinos, which has attracted more financing options, he added.

"The council is meeting soon to decide what to do," Curley said.

Paradise Ridge in Scottsdale is a year away from starting construction, according to head partner Ernie Vossler. The 2,000-acre project will have a large residential area. The Indio, Calif., facility would be adjacent to Del Webb's Sun City project, and the Chile layout will be an hour from Santiago.

Landmark Land Co.'s financial woes have been well-chronicled. The Resolution Trust Corp. recently auctioned off the bankrupt firm's major properties, including PGA West, Carmel Valley Ranch, Mission Hills Country Club, LaQuinta Hotel Golf & Tennis Resort, Palm Beach Polo & Country Club and Kiawah Island Resort (see related story, page 27).

But despite those problems, Landmark Golf's partners didn't hesitate to use the name. "People in the golf business were aware of the financial situation [that brought down Landmark Land Co.]," Curley said. "Landmark's reputation for creating quality facilities has not been tarnished. The problems that hurt Landmark weren't particular to Landmark. Just about anyone dealing with S&Ls had problems during the 1980s."

National Golf Foundation Vice President Rick Norton agreed. "I can't see that the name or association as a positive or a negative," Norton said. "They obviously have good experience in the golf business. They certainly can't be held responsible for Landmark [Land Co.'s] situation."

Landmark Golf's partners include former Landmark Land executives Vossler (ex-vice president), Pott (helped design/build Carmel Canyon/PGA West), Curley, William "Buzz" Gill (ex-president of Landmark Management Co.) and Chuck Fairbanks (ex-president of Landmark Land Co. of Arizona Inc.).