KOCH, ROBBINS JOIN FORCES
TAMPA, Fla. — Gary Koch, president of Gary Koch Golf, Inc. and Richard Robbins, president of Robbins & Associates, have formed Robbins Koch Golf Designs, Inc. Robbins Koch will provide golf course design, construction and management services in the United States, as well as selected projects in Asia. Koch, a six-time winner on the PGA Tour, began designing golf courses in 1990 when he was selected to design the Las Colinas course at Mission Inn Golf and Tennis Resort, near Orlando. Robbins has actively practiced course design, land planning and project management for more than 20 years.

MORE BUILDERS CERTIFIED
CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — The Golf Course Builders Association of America has approved a second group of companies as certified golf course builders. They are Central Florida Turf of Avon Park, Fla. (Jeffrey Harstine, president); Environmental Golf of Santa Ana, Calif. (Gene Giannulli, president); Fairway Construction of Temecula, Calif. (Glen A. Gosch); Landscapes Unlimited of Lincoln, Neb. (Bill Kubly, president). GCBAA Executive Director Phil Arnold called the certified builders "a very elite group."

MASON'S AWBREY GLEN OPENS
BEND, Ore. — The Awbrey Glen Golf Club held its grand opening July 23-25, featuring the groundbreaking ceremonies for the club's new championship private golf course, designed by Gene "Bunny" Mason, is now open to members and limited outside play.

NIEBUR MOVES, KEEPS BUSY
MEDFORD, Ore. — Niebur Golf, which has been operating out of Atlanta, Ga., has moved its headquarters here, according to Joe Niebur. Niebur recently completed construction of AnnBriar Golf Course in Waterloo, Ill., and is working on an 18-hole course that will be the centerpiece of the Merriwood at Hawk's Prairie subdivision in Olympia, Wash. Weyerhauser and Vico are developers and Bill Overdorf is the course architect for the Merriwood facility. Niebur's new address is 820 Crater Lake Road, Suite 205, Medford 97504; 503-779-2771.

Tennessee offers $20M in bonds for golf projects
NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Developers are being invited to apply for $20 million in general obligation bonds the state of Tennessee is offering for construction and operation of golf courses on state land, including eight state parks.

Under discussion for years, the plan was passed by the state legislature on July 1. The deadline for proposals is Sept. 15.

Mark McCumber: Designer cum Tour pro
Mark McCumber: I think my situation may be one of the most unusual of Tour players who are doing "golf architecture." My brother started a landscape company in New York in 1971—literally working in the ground, doing state jobs, regional malls, big irrigation jobs. We used to get irrigation jobs for golf courses back in the early ‘70s—always knowing we wanted to be in the golf course building and design business, preferably design. But we had to get into it by the back door by the construction side. In 1978 we got our first piece of land and started designing our first golf course before I even had my Tour card. So I got my Tour card in July of 1978 while we were in the middle of designing our first golf course—The Ravines, which is this day is one of our most dramatic pieces of land. So the irony is that is this something I had been doing before I ever won money swinging a golf club.

I have a passion for both tremendously and equally. The one thing I am trying to do this year—which has made both jobs easier—is to try to segregate the two. They are interwined, but while I’m playing I’m trying to only think about playing those five days on tour. Then when I come home, I’m dedicating time to design.
Swan-e-Set on the edge

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constructed. A similar compensation policy also applies to wildlife. "For every acre (of wildlife habitat) lost," said Urhahn, "you must create an acre, whether it be on or off of the site."

For the most part, these objectives are easily met. Urhahn claims golf courses actually enhance wildlife habitat, creating a more stable ecological site through "eco-complexity." This enables the course to comply in excess of the 100 percent of the no net loss and compensation policy.

Steve Monahan, of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, who chaired the Swan-e-Set Environmental Task Force, said he is pleased with the results and Swan-e-Set's strict adherence to its findings.

McFarlane said that although most individual development projects are reviewed through normal processes, a project as large as a golf course "needs to be reviewed in its whole context." Thus the call for the task force.

The process took two to three years. The end product, according to McFarlane, is "a pretty good golf course, and a pretty good environmental project."

McFarlane said the principles involved in an environmental golf course study are the same as those that apply to urban development, and have been loosely applied to golf courses in British Columbia since the mid-1970s. Only recently have government agencies felt a need to get more involved.

The shift in government involvement has reached the point where the provincial Environment Ministry must give final approval to course design, layout and completed construction.

Urhahn tells of one developer who approached his firm for consultation in designing a course. When the developer found the environmental policies too expensive and the size of his land inadequate, he opted to build estate villas. In order to meet environmental requirements, the developer left 80 percent of his villa development green.

Ten years ago, a course could be built on 50 acres of land. According to Urhahn, the same course today would take up 110 acres because of the environmental requirements.

Urhahn estimates the environmental study conducted for Swan-e-Set and its subsequent implementation added approximately 10 to 15 percent to the cost of the project, or $2 million to $18 million.

McFarlane claimed no knowledge of that end of golf course development. Asked whether he was aware of the possibility that the restrictive nature of the government's environmental policy may prohibit a golf course from being developed, he claimed ignorance.

McFarlane said: "We get tons of proposals. Few get off the ground."

"The Swan-e-Set Task Force was the first of its kind in British Columbia golf course development. Whether its findings are overly expensive, or overly protective is not yet certain, and will be debated in the near future. What is certain is the fact that they will set the tone for future developments in the province."

Tennessee OKs $20M in bonds

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that, it becomes state property. Bonds said the state's intent is that the courses be 100-percent self-sufficient and service all the debt. If not feasible, no money will be spent.

"We've had a lot of calls and response," he said. "I'm afraid many have the idea we want to come in and finance them. The purpose is to provide low-cost municipal bond interest to someone who can make over two of them work. We're not going to spend a nickel until we get the feasibility from the prospective groups or they can show us, beyond a doubt, that they will pay up. The state does not want to be put in the position of spending any money to make the bonds good.

"Whether it will work, I don't know. Some have told me one will work or none will work."

The 1988 feasibility studies indicated new courses would start servicing the debt after three or four years.

But those studies have not been updated. Also when those studies were performed, architect Gary Roger Baird of Nashville did routing plans on the new bond legislation was passed to provide the cheapest capital possible so debt burden is not as cumbersome, he added.