The Gulf Coast is becoming a gaming mecca, but golf

Change of Course
After years of prodding, the EPA will alter its peer-

Destination: Mississippi
The Gulf Coast is becoming a gaming mecca, but golf
would complete the package.
Miss. coast adding golf component
Continued from page 27
be interested in donating 150 acres to private golf developers while retaining the remaining acreage to develop into house lots or mixed-use project that would benefit from an adjoining, daily-fee golf course.

That list of potential sites as well as information on tax incentives and demographics will become part of a formal development package Wizeman expects to complete this month. He will distribute the information to golf developers he believes may be interested in coming to the Mississippi Gulf coast.

The area has 17 courses already. Mark McCumber-designed Windance Country Club in Gulfport is one of the best known.

"The existing course owners want us to bring in additional development and golfers, too," Wizeman said. "It would give them the chance to raise fees and make improvements. It's unusual but very nice to have that kind of support from existing course owners."

Wizeman predicts course developers will have little trouble obtaining building permits since the generally highland sites have few wetlands and local government favors the golf destination concept.

If construction of six to eight new courses gets underway next year, they will open just about the same time 3,000 hotel rooms currently under construction are scheduled to come on line. Another 2,000 rooms are planned and could be ready by late 1996. That would bring the total number of hotel rooms to 11,500, a 77 percent increase over the 6,500 currently available.

"If you filled those rooms, you could build another 25 courses down here," Wizeman said. Once the development package is complete, Wizeman will start work on a marketing program to attract golfers. One of the keys will be a centralized reservation system with a single (800) number visitors can call to reserve airline tickets, car rentals, accommodations and tee times.

"Gulfport has more air carriers [5] serving it than Myrtle Beach [2]," Wizeman said. "They had 200 charter flights land here in June for gambling groups."

Still, Wizeman expects most golfers will drive rather than fly to the Mississippi Coast. That's similar to Myrtle Beach, where 90 percent of golfers use ground transportation to reach the links.

The Midwest golfer will be the area's target market, Wizeman said. And course operators will market heavily, he predicted.

"They spend more money on marketing here in a single month than Myrtle Beach does for the entire year," Wizeman said.

Wizeman has been in the golf and resort business for 25 years. Originally from Virginia Beach, Va., he moved to Myrtle Beach in 1980. He founded the U.S./Japan Golfers Association in 1987, which set up tours and tournaments for vacationing Japanese golfers at U.S. golf courses. Business boomed until the early 1990s when the Japanese economy soured, Wizeman said.

"Those were the worst two financial years of my life," said Wizeman, who still operates the scaled-down U.S./Japan Golfers Association.

He formed International Golf Partners two years ago along with California course builder Joe Perry, Florida hotel consultant Donald Ross and Alabama financial adviser Terry Swalm.

IGP played a key role in bringing together Chesapeake Corp. of Richmond, Va., and The Legends Group of Myrtle Beach to develop six recently announced courses in the Williamsburg, Va., area.

Arnie speaks
Continued from page 1
sort courses.

"The numbers don't lie," Palmer will keynote the conference on Nov. 11, opening the trade show and setting the stage for afternoon conference sessions in the areas of Agronomy, Management and Development. Each education track is designed to shed light on issues unique to the public-access golf market.

"We feel Golf Course Expo fills a clear need in the golf course industry," added von Brecht. "Public-access golf operations are the fastest growing sector of the industry, yet there is no forum for its vendors or its particular educational needs. This exhibition and conference are designed to remedy both situations."

For instance, Don Tobon — superintendent at Fox Hollow Golf Club in Lakewood, Colo. — will discuss ways to maintain golf courses under high-traffic conditions. Fox Hollow, a 27-hole course, has 120 golfers a day on the course and Tobon is trying to keep the grass green and turf in shape for the next round of golfers.
Palmer

Continued from previous page

The Agronomy program will also feature Pat McHugh, director of golf course maintenance and grounds at Doral Resort & Country Club in Miami, who will discuss innovative staffing and crew motivational techniques. In addition, Patrick O'Brien — director of the United States Golf Association Green Section, Southeastern Region — will tackle the subject, “Maintenance on a Shoestring.”

As part of the Management program, Ken James — senior vice president of operations and acquisition at American Golf Corp. — will discuss “Five Critical Issues to Operational Success.” Terry Buchen, CGCS and author of GCN’s “Savvy Superintendent” column, will enlighten owners and managers on course-related matters with his discussion of “Agronomy for Non-Agronomists.”

The Development track, co-sponsored by Golf Course News and the National Golf Foundation, will feature several discussions of financing: Reid Marks of NationsBank on traditional sources; Bill Wallace, vice president of Golf Services Group, on public-private partnerships; and Greg Cory of Economic Research Associates on the value of feasibility studies.

Also included in the Development program will be Dennis Tull, owner of Scooter’s Golf Center, the national authority on development of alternative golf facilities; architect Bob Lohmann, principal of Lohmann Golf Designs, Inc., who will discuss course renovation and its relation to the bottom line; and Stuart Cohen, president of Environmental Turf Services, Inc., who will speak on environmental regulation and its effect on sound public-access development.

Golf Course Expo is the first exposition and conference devoted to public-access golf. Exhibitors include fertilizer, seed, and sod, consultant services, golf cars, mowers, aeration, irrigation equipment, chemicals, architectural services, construction services, software, equipment parts, landscape supplies, utility equipment, greens rollers and ball washers, among others.


For more information on attending the trade show or conference, call the Golf Course Expo hotline at 1-800-846-0600, ext. 248.

Marty Golf

Continued from page 27

and William an on-the-field player coach,” Marty said.

Marty concentrates on membership sales and generating greens fees. Ochsenhirt, a certified public accountant, creates business plans for MGM clubs and oversees course maintenance and golf shop operations. Fitzpatrick relies on his operations background to recruit and train course personnel.

Plans are to have 10 to 15 clubs under full-management contracts by the end of next year. All will be within the 500-mile radius of Mobile that Marty considers his market area.

“That will give us the base we need to begin leasing or acquiring clubs ourselves,” Marty said.

While describing membership sales as the firm’s strength, Marty said the company never loses sight of the importance of course maintenance nor the superintendent’s role in a club’s success.

“No one is more important than the superintendent,” the company president said. “Without him, and a quality course, what do you have? Nothing.”

Head superintendents at all of the company’s full-management clubs are GCSAA members, Marty said.

Plans are to hire assistant superintendents who can be trained to manage new clubs as they become available.

Additionally, the company planned to hire a full-time agronomic consultant by the end of July to oversee maintenance at all facilities, Marty said.

Most of the company’s courses are upscale, daily-fee layouts with a smattering of private clubs.

In addition to Pine Tree, the company manages Chuck Hogan Golf School and Tour Golf’s Practice Tee in Birmingham; Saddle Creek Golf Club in Lewisburg, Tenn.; Hamilton Mill Golf Course in Atlanta; and Jennings Mill CC in Athens, Ga.

The firm has instituted membership programs at Port Malabar CC in Palm Bay, Fla.; Wake Forest CC in Wake Forest, N.C.; and Laurel Ridge CC in Waynesville, N.C.

Marty has management consulting agreements with Chantilly Manor CC in Rising Sun, Md., and The Illinois Center in Chicago.

The Workman™ four wheels mean greater stability plus a full 2600 lb.* capacity. Nobody has more jobs than a golf course or park superintendent. But you can’t do everything or go everywhere.

So here comes the Toro Workman™ 3000. A totally new work vehicle with four wheel stability, three wheel maneuverability and incredible versatility. It not only hauls more cargo, but also lifts, tows, dumpers, sprays, spreads, levels, conditions, saws, trims, washes, top dresses, and more.

All with Toro reliability.

It’s the latest product of our partnership with three generations of superintendents. To create turf areas of stunning beauty and superb playability. The Toro Workman 3000. It’s a lot like you. It works, works, works.

One ton of cargo, plus 100 lb. operator and passenger.

Helping You Put Quality Into Play.™

For more details, contact your Toro Distributor.

CIRCLE #113