MARKETING IDEA OF THE MONTH
The incentive is profits in the incentive business

By PETER BLAIS

Rewarding productive employees for travel vacations has been one of the most successful methods for corporations to keep their best workers.

Warmer locales such as Florida, Southern California, Hawaii and the Caribbean have been the traditional destinations to which companies have sent their best sales people, department heads who come in under budget or supervisors with strong safety records. Increasingly, golf courses, particularly in Northern areas, are beginning to see corporate incentive travel as a way to fill rounds at their facilities and are tapping into the lucrative $5.2 billion market (Society of Incentive Travel Executives figure).

"Corporate incentive packages make up 15 to 20 percent of our rounds," said Shanty Creek (Mich.) Director of Marketing Barry Godwin. The incentive travel business at the Bellaire, Mich., complex has been growing steadily in recent years, Godwin said. Attracted by the nationally ranked Legend Course as well as the Northern Michigan resort's other three layouts, corporations are increasingly looking at the area's golf packages as a way to reward their best employees. Incentive groups average about 50 people with average stays of two nights/three days, Godwin reported.

AGCC SIGNS ON IN SACRAMENTO

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — American Golf Country Clubs (a division of American Golf Corp.) has received a long-term operating lease for Oaks Golf & Country Club in Nicholls, located approximately 20 minutes from Sacramento. The private, 18-hole layout is tentatively scheduled to open early next year.

NAG NAMES RIPPEY PRESIDENT

LOMBARD, Ill. — Michael Rippey has been named president of North American Golf, the full-service golf course development and management company based here. Rippey takes over the position previously held by George Rourke, who will remain as principal stockholder and director. NAG manages seven courses, primarily in the Midwest.

Shanty Creek Golf Course has successfully catered to the corporate incentive travel market.

NAG extends GolfCorp lease

DIAMOND BAR, Calif. — Los Angeles County has agreed to a 15-year extension of GolfCorps' management agreement at Diamond Bar Golf Course. The Club Corporation International subsidiary has operated the county-owned, 18-hole, daily-fee facility since 1987. More than $1.4 million in course improvements are underway, including a renovated driving range and new irrigation system.

Paddy Knaggs

Official says clubs take insufficient time selecting course superintendent

By PETER BLAIS

SAN FRANCISCO — The superintendent is in charge of the primary asset at many clubs. And yet, few clubs take sufficient care in selecting the most important individual on the payroll, according to Reed Mackenzie, past president of Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska, Minn.

"The most important thing a club can do is analyze its own situation and decide what it wants from its superintendent," said Mackenzie, who has been part of the Hazeltine search committee for two superintendents, Chris Hague and his successor, Paddy Knaggs.

No books or pamphlets were available to instruct the Hazeltine greens committee how to begin the search process when its superintendent abruptly quit back in 1982 just prior to the U.S. Senior Open. The club was fortunate to land Hague, Mackenzie said. The committee refined its technique and was better prepared when it hired Knaggs three years ago, he added.

While there is no standard operating procedure for hiring a course manager, Mackenzie recounted Hazeltine's guidelines during the International Conference and Show.

• Appoint a chairman of the search committee. The green chairman is often the person selected. The most important thing, however, is that it be someone with sufficient time to devote to the search.

• Establish a selection committee of three to six people. Members should be familiar with golf, club facilities, budgetary process and superintendent responsibilities. A woman and a financial expert should be part of the committee. Members should have eight to 10 weeks to devote to the search.

• Develop a detailed job description. This allows the committee to focus on its needs and applicants to know what will be expected. The GCSAA, association chapters, U.S. Golf Association and other clubs can help formulate a job description.

• In addition to lines of authority, salary and budget size, other items on the job description might include club expectations regarding the superintendent's participation in professional associations, educating interns, dealing with local government boards and enrolling in classes.

• Establish a compensation package that

Jones elected pres. of Nat'l Club Assn.

WASHINGTON — Hugh Jones was elected president of the National Club Association during the organization's recent annual meeting in Charleston, S.C. Jones was partner-in-charge of the audit department in the Orlando office of KPMG Peat Marwick until retiring in 1991. He is a consultant to agribusinesses and not-for-profit organizations and a member and past president of the Country Club of Orlando.

A National Club Association member since 1990, Jones had previously served as treasurer. He succeeds James Masler, vice chairman of the board of ClubCorp International, as the association's president.

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