Public-access supply meeting demand in Ocean City, Md.

By ROTA KNOTT

OCEAN CITY, Md. — With eight public-access golf courses in the works, including four within planned communities and two more 18-hole additions at existing clubs, this region on Maryland's Eastern Shore has invested heavily in the golf destination business.

Eight courses are already flourishing in and around the resort town. First to join them will likely be the new 18 at The Beach Club, which was originally planned as a 36-hole facility. Hunt Crosby, a spokesman for facility, said it's not only ready for play by July 1996.

Andy Loving, PGA professional at Ocean City's municipal course, Eagle's Landing, said business has picked up steadily since it opened in 1991. It currently operates near full capacity. "I really think building new courses will be good overall," said Loving. "People are coming. They know about Ocean City; they just can't get on the courses much of the time."

The 36-hole Ocean City Golf and Yacht Club, the resort's first golf course, is making some minor improvements to keep pace. River Run, a golf community located just outside the resort, recently completed improvements to its track, including rebuilding three greens.

The area's other established golf course community, Ocean Pines, has tentatively planned a second set of championship links, pending a referendum vote. If approved in the referendum, work on the new Ocean Pines course could start by this fall.

Three new golf communities — Lightstone Sound, Kiddle Farm and Woodcock Farm — are in various stages of the planning process. Kiddle Farm will boast two separate 18-hole courses, one public and one semi-private, covering approximately 380 acres. Plans for Woodcock Farm include an 18-hole golf course, also.

Dual proposals, one containing 18 holes of golf and the other calling for 27 holes, have been approved for Lightstone Sound. The property owners have not yet made a decision as to which plan to pursue.

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Golf Course Superintendents, Turf Grass Managers, Soil Grass Growers and Nurserymen are praising the results of Regal Crown, a blend of hormones specifically designed to promote root growth in turfgrasses and ornamentals. Used regularly, Regal Crown roots can minimize hot weather dry wilt stresses and winter desiccation.

Football Great Dick Butkus says, "Mark Anywhere Quickly and Easily with the Original Upside Down Aerosol Power Paint Cartridge!"

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"Growing golf is very exciting. There is a definite need for new courses," Smith said. "A demand has been created by the sheer number of golfers who come here to play new instead of going elsewhere."

Smith said the goal of Golf Getaway, which is expanding its membership to include new courses as they open, is to bond golf courses with the local community to promote Ocean City as a golf destination.

The organization is funded and governed by its membership, which includes all the existing courses in the vicinity of Ocean City as well as several within a 30-mile radius of the resort.

Golf Getaway, in conjunction with the town itself, promotes the resort golf facilities nationwide through advertising, utilizing both the print media and television sources, press releases and sponsoring local golf tournaments.

Alex FauntLeRoy, executive director, continued on page 43

Course cooperative, Golf Getaway, has promoted tourism and continued growth

By ROTA KNOTT

OCEAN CITY, Md. — Growing golf has been an easy task, but the hard work of promoting this area as a golfing destination is only just beginning.

Plans are currently in the works for eight new golf courses, seven championship and one executive, all of which may come on-line over the next two or three years. In addition, both major and minor improvements are underway at several of the existing courses.

Those involved in the golf industry are confident the area can handle all the proposed activity. Indeed, some feel the area may require even more courses to keep up with the demand for tee times.

Sandi Smith is manager of Ocean City's Golf Getaway, an organization established in 1991 through a cooperative effort of the five courses in existence at that time to promote golf in the area. She said the game has been on a continuous upswing locally.

Information for Watermark

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Alex FauntLeRoy, executive director, continued on page 43
Ocean City hitches its regional growth to phenomenon of public-access golf

Continued from page 46

How many new courses can the area handle? FauntLeRoy said he doesn’t know what the area can absorb. But any additional facilities can do nothing but help continue growth in the golfing industry, he said. Increased golfing activity in the resort has just meant business for course owners, but will increase business for hotels and motels, restaurants and the retail shops in the area also, Smith said.

Promotes business in the shoulder months for Ocean City and acts as one more amenity which complements the resort’s beaches, but does not place a great demand on the community’s resources, she said. It doesn’t hurt that the resort lies along the beaten path for visitors from the major metropolitan areas of Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Wilmington, Delaware and even New Jersey and New York.

Nurturing the relationship between the golf courses and the associated businesses of Ocean City, however, is an on-going process. In the spring and fall, hotels, which often offer golf packages, are filled with visitors. But when the beach season rolls around, some of the hotels that golfers are filled with visitors. But when the beach season rolls around, some of the hotels that golfers have been coming to stay at the beach for years,” said FauntLeRoy. “We’re Ocean City, Maryland, we’re growing and we’re glad to be at the beach for years.”

Smith said. “That has been one of our main challenges.” She credits the efforts of both the golf courses and the Ocean City community as a whole for the success the area has had in establishing itself as a new golf mecca.

“There’s a remote possibility Ocean City could become like a small Myrtle Beach, but I really don’t think we want to be the small Myrtle Beach, but I really don’t think we want to be the small Myrtle Beach, but I really don’t think we want to be the small Myrtle Beach, but I really don’t think we want to be the small Myrtle Beach.” Smith explained.

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