**GOLF COURSE EXPO**

**Audubon, allied associations target public-access courses at Expo**

By Peter Blais

ORLANDO — Profit centers, the environment, planning, financing and public/private partnerships. These are all matters developers and operators of public golf courses didn’t have to worry about just a few years ago.

But the golf industry has changed dramatically in the past decade. The golf boom of the 1980s was great for many, but operators of public golf courses were not left out. With greater governmental scrutiny and increased competition, developers now have to consider new factors affecting public golf development.

The first of those factors, course architect Dr. Michael Hurdzan, will follow Thursday morning with a keynote address from fellow architect Pete Dye and his family. Hurdzan will speak from 10:15 to 11:15 a.m. on "The Value and Trends in Golf Learning." Hurdzan has designed some of golf’s most famous courses, including Devil’s Pulpit and Devil’s Paintbrush in Caliendo, Ontario, named the best new course in Canada in 1992 and 1993 by Golf Digest magazine.

The Columbus, Ohio-based designer also worked as a golf course superintendent and a course builder before becoming a course architect.

"Golf has long suffered from an image problem that it was a rich, white man’s sport," Hurdzan said. "It’s a mistaken perception, but that’s what many people believe. One of the reasons they feel that way is they haven’t been exposed to the game. Learning centers will help improve the game’s image by exposing more people to golf. Practice centers are also good business. A well-designed facility will be attractive to 100 people of the population rather than just the 10 percent of the population that plays on regulation courses. And golf practice centers will help the game grow."

Stuart Cohen, president of Environmental & Turf Services Inc., will wrap up Thursday’s Development Track with a one-hour discussion of "The Current Environment of Environmental Permitting" at 12:15 p.m. At his Wheaton, Md.-based firm, Cohen is responsible for supervising and conducting field and computer risk assessments for turf chemicals used on golf courses. Cohen received the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Special Achievement Award for work in ground-water contamination by pesticides and the EPA bronze medal for this chloride dibromide groundwater assessment.

Jack Mathis, president of Golf Plan Group, opens Friday’s NGF session speaking from 10:15 to 11:15 a.m. on "The Importance of Planning Your Golf Project." Mathis has organized many multi-million-dollar projects during his 20-plus year career in course planning, design and development. His company works directly with course developers, builders and architects throughout the creative planning and government approval phases.

Peter Minga and program run hand in hand," Mathis said. "Proper planning and programming won’t guarantee success. But improper planning and programming will guarantee failure."

**Hiers added to Expo speaking program**

ORLANDO, Fla. — Tim Hiers, certified golf course superintendent at Collier’s Reserve in Naples, will replace Double Eagle superintendent Terry Buchen as a speaker at the Expo here Nov. 9-10.

With Buchen unable to attend, attendees will hear a litany of money-saving tips from Hiers, who last February became the first individual to ever be awarded the President’s Environmental Award from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Under his leadership, Collier’s Reserve became the first Audubon Signature facility in the world.

Winner of the first-ever John James Audubon Steward and the Florida Region Environmental Steward awards, Hiers will share a number of ways to save money on the course and in the maintenance complex while conserving the environment.

**Fundraising Methodology: Public Sector Options and Private Sector Options will be the topic for speakers Gregory Fairbanks and Kimberly Reece from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. Fairbanks is vice president of investment banking for Miller & Schroeder Financial in Columbus, Ohio. He has more than 10 years experience in the securities and finance industries and has been financing municipal courses since 1989. Reece is affiliated with NationsBank’s commercial banking division covering Raleigh, N.C. and the greater Wake County area. During his 22-year career with NationsBank, Reece has provided financing for all types of golf course projects throughout the Carolinas and Virginia.

The final Friday session runs from 3-4 p.m. and features Ladies Professional Golf Association Director of Finance and Administration Kathy Milthorpe and Consolidated Development’s Bill McMunn. They will speak on Public/Private Agreements that may relate to the public-access, 36-hole LPGA International in Daytona Beach, Fla.

The development of the LPGA’s new headquarters and resort is one of the major projects of the LPGA, the state of Florida, landowner Consolidated-Tomoka Land Co., the city of Daytona Beach and the Buena Vista Hospitality Group, according to Milthorpe.

"This type of cooperative effort is becoming more popular because of the difficulties municipalities and private developers may be going it alone," Milthorpe said. "We’ll discuss how this partnership came about, some of the successes we’ve enjoyed and the difficulties we encountered."