As Maine goes... One-stop permitting is here!

By Mark Leslie

UGUSTA, Maine—When Dick and Ron Foster applied for a permit to build a golf course on 112 acres in Litchfield, the process took seven weeks. Some 3,500 miles away, California has opened nine Permit Assistance Centers (PACs), bringing together permitting authorities from state and local government to simplify the process.

States from Maine to California are taking innovative steps toward regulatory reform and improved customer service, slashing huge amounts of time and paperwork off the quagmire of the permitting process. Their aim: to invigorate their economies while maintaining a quality environment.

The seven weeks to get approval for the Foster project is a shocking speed in many states. But it may become more commonplace as time passes.

"There are a lot of innovative programs going on in all the [New England] states right now," said Brooke Barnes, director of policy development and implementation for the Maine DEP, which is the state's "pinnacle of licensing and permitting," he added. "The EPA [Federal Environmental Protection Agency] is allowing more experimentation in different ways to approach regulating the environment — not just command-and-control stuff," Barnes said.

"In just the issue of processing, the agencies are always trying to reduce the time and still hold the line on their mission. Our mission is to protect the environment. We want to be customer...

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North and Packard & A

BRIEFS

RYANGOLF Hires ALlen

DEERFIELD BEACH, Fla. — Rynagolf, a division of Ryan Inc. East, has added Tracy Allen to its golf course construction team. Allen brings many years of relationships within the golf industry. He sits on the board of directors of The Florida State Golf Association, and is a former director of The Southern Golf Association, as well as a former member of the editorial board of Links Magazine.

ARCHITECTS ENDORSE PRINCIPLES

PINEHURST, N.C. — The American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) has endorsed the Environmental Principles for Golf Courses in the United States "because we believe it is good for golf courses in their environment... and good for the communities in which we live and work," said ASGCA President Denis Griffiths.

BARDMOOR FACELIFT BEGINS

LARGO, Fla. — Bardmoor Golf Club began a $500,000 renovation of its 18-hole championship golf course in June. The course is expected to reopen July 27.

Riviera does a double at 10

By Mark Leslie

PACIFIC PALISADES, Calif. — Riviera Country Club's 10th hole may be the best short par-4 in the country. So it was with trepidation that the powers that be at the club decided something needed to be done to save the little green from the pounding of 60,000 rounds a year.

In late July, course officials will unveil the results of their decision: Instead of enlarging the 3,000-square-foot 10th green, they added a second, permanent part-time green, also about 3,000 square feet in size, to be used certain days of the week.

"It's a unique concept and an intriguing project," said course architect Ron Forse of Uniontown, Pa. "At first, I didn't want to take it. I didn't want to be part of ruining what may be the most unique hole in [architect] George Thomas' masterpiece."

But Forse saw that the second green could be added and still maintain the strategy of the hole:

"Thomas had that extra fairway bunker off to the right and with the same backslope as the original green. So we hid the new green behind the existing bunker just like the original green," he said. "Also, the new green has the same slope as the original. And the same type of strategy works for the new green as well."

Sitting at 315 yards out from the back tee and 301 from the members'...

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"We contribute individually to a team effort... and more. We like the combination... and we have the same work ethic. And we have the respect for each other. And the respect is there, and the competition is there. And that's what makes us a good team." — Roger Packard

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North and Packard & A

BRIEFS

ENGH, ROBINSON MOVE

CASTLE ROCK, Colo. — The golf course design firms of Jim Engh and Cabell R. Robinson have both moved. Jim Engh and his Global Golf Design/Architecture...
Government streamlining is leading to one-stop permitting process

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In Virginia, Boyd said, the Marine Resources Commission is the clearinghouse for joint permitting, combining the work of three separate agencies. On the other hand, Maryland "hasn't tried [to speed the process] by any means," he said. Boyd explained: "Much of it is the individual regulators within the departments. A lot of personal feelings enter into this." Developers have clamored for a streamlined process for decades, but have mainly been left stewing. "There is no manual that spells out who to see for permits," said golf course architect Brad Booth of Ogunquit. "But in Maine now, the DEP is the only point of review; only one permit is needed. And that's good." "The facts are," said Barnes, "we're working smarter. Increased use of computers and such things enable us to work better internally. We've changed our procedures and rules dealing with applications so that when someone is considering a project they now are talking with us at the very early concept-design stages. In the traditional way of doing it, someone designs a project, gets their consultants in line, fills out the application and drops it on our desk. And we say, 'My God, you're filling in 10 acres of wetland!' "By front-loading the process, the Maine DEP sends an application to us, we've identified the hot issues and helped them design the project around the environmental impacts. We've already minimized or eliminated the impacts before the application comes in."

Citing the streamlining as "revolutionary," Barnes said: "The respective agencies have their different views about how they do their jobs and what their charges are. But the level of cooperation is at an all-time high. "— Brooke Barnes
Maine DEP

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