IGM STRIKES NEW DEAL
LAKE PLACID, Fla. — International Golf Management, Inc. (IGM) has taken over professional golf course maintenance services for Leisure Lakes Golf Course here. IGM will provide course maintenance and landscape management. Leisure Lakes is located in the Leisure Lakes Resort along the shoreline of Lake June. The resort is owned by Avatar Properties.

HUEBER TO BUILD COURSE
LOS ANGELES — David Hueber, a widely known golf industry executive and president of Foothills Golf Development Group LLC, will develop an 18-hole public course 15 miles from downtown Los Angeles.

Minimum wage hike to have little impact
By PETER BLAIS
The 90-cent increase in the minimum wage to $4.75 per hour scheduled to take effect this month will have little impact on course maintenance operations, according to superintendents.

While some courses likely pay close to the minimum wage, those contacted by Golf Course News said they already pay laborers more than the new lower limit. "Most courses in our area are well above the minimum," said Lee McLemore, head superintendent at Birmingham (Ala.) Country Club. "Our wages have gone up significantly the past few years to compete in a small labor pool where unemployment is running around 3.5 percent. We're competing with other businesses, like McDonald's, for workers and they're already above $5 per hour."

McLemore said he starts laborers at $5.15 that becomes law Sept. 1, 1997. The best part of the [minimum wage] bill from our perspective was the change that now allows private clubs to start 401k retirement plans for employees," McLemore said. "I called our senators to encourage them to support the bill because of that. A 401k plan allows us to encourage our employees to save and invest their money in a tax-advantaged way."

PLAYER REMODELS
KIAWAH COURSE
The second hole at Cougar Point Golf Course is part of a $4 million renovation recently completed by Gary Player for Kiawah Island Resort owner Virginia Investment Trust (VIT). Cougar Point opened Sept. 8 on the site of the former Marsh Point course, also a Player design. VIT acquired Kiawah in a Resolution Trust Corp. auction of Landmark Land Co. properties in October, 1993.

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"When we first took over here, we asked the customers what we could do to improve. They wanted us to do a better job handling the golf carts, put starters at both courses, and start a marshaling program. We did those things and the course runs much more smoothly than it did." Yonke gained this insight into the need to quiz customers while working at the course level. He joined Jim Colbert Golf in 1984 and managed several different operations before becoming Colbert's quality manager. Prior to founding Fore Star in 1992, Yonke received the National Golf Foundation Public Golf Award for his efforts to promote and enhance the game. Brothers Jeff and Gary Miller soon joined
Fore Star

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Yonke. Like Yonke, Jeff was reared in daily operations. He is in charge of marketing all Fore Star properties and manages Picacho Hills Country Club in Las Cruces, N.M. Gary oversees Fore Star’s financial and administrative functions. A certified public accountant, he served 16 years as chief financial officer of AGF Industries, a $500 million company.

Fore Star has grown steadily, adding one or two courses annually. In addition to Meadowbrook and Picacho Hills, the company operates Hollywood Park Golf Center in Los Angeles, Hound Hollow Golf Center in Portland, Ore., The Links at Sierra Blanca in Ruidoso, N.M., and Scott Park Municipal Golf Course in Silver City, N.M.

“T’ve seen other companies have growth spurts where they’ve added a bunch of courses all at once and then played catch-up until they could manage them efficiently,” Yonke said. We want to have a more planned growth and stay within our means to be a daily part of each operation.

TV and radio

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