Amid flag-waving, a couple cavets give industry pause

It’s always an education to report on the previous year’s course openings (see page 31), as reactions never seem to match up with the data — good or bad.

The 442 facilities unveiled during 1996 constitute the second highest total in history, trailing only 1995’s total of 468. However, several people I interviewed for this month’s story could hardly believe the 434 figure was accurate. Of course, if anything, the number is low, as certain new course owners surely failed to inform the NGF of their activities.

In any case, several architects I interviewed for the story asked how many courses are currently under construction. When I answered, “more than 800,” they were somewhat incredulous.

“Well, that’s a healthy number,” said one. “But it’s hard to believe when I have construction firms calling me looking for jobs.”

Another said: “I just don’t believe that number. If it’s that busy, why are construction people writing to me for work? Also, there are a lot of architects out there who are really struggling. I guess the market is better for those of us who have established reputations. But the up-and-coming guys are having a real tough time.”

Most of the architects interviewed for this story admitted they, too, had fielded calls from course builders eager for work. They also agreed that touring professionals dabling in design have taken work away from “legitimate” architects.

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