Airport-area courses ready for take-off?

By J. Barry Motthes

"Cheap land near airport. Water, sewerage and electricity already in place. Located near transportation center. Possible neighbors include office or industrial parks. Round-the-clock security available..."

Some fairways have already been cut at the Bob Cupp-designed Arrowleaf course.

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Robinson sees ray of hope for tepid old world market

He may be an American native and a Princeton University graduate, but Cabell B. Robinson has lived in Spain for 26 years and conducts business from his office in Mijas. Robinson spent 1967-86 with Robert Trent Jones Sr. He was sent to Europe in 1970 to open an RTJ office.

"Third, we want to create strong events like the Hassan II Trophy and sit near an 800-acre business park cleared in the forest, the new Arrowleaf development is not yet out of the woods. To understand the conflict which has, at times, pitted neighbor against neighbor — a closer look at the resort site is necessary.

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A Development's Tale

HAPPY ENDOING FOR 25-YEAR-OLD WASH. STATE PROPOSAL?

By Bob Spiwak

Until last year, the hamlet of Mazama comprised a store/gas-station and an inn. Located at the county's northwest corner, the town is surrounded by national forest, a wilderness area and the North Cascades National Park. State Highway 20, which bisects the resort, is closed by snow from November to April. The area contains the nation's second-largest groomed cross-country ski area. At the upper end of the 70-mile-long Methow Valley, the pristine setting has attracted new residents from throughout the country.

In 1970, when The Aspen Corp. conceived a destination downhill ski re...
Airport projects
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interstate highway right next to the airport. Our golf course is looking at a national market and the golf course makes for an upscale business park. It’s a synergistic thing. The golf course has generated more interest in the business park because of its presence.”

Airport authority officials in Minneapolis-St. Paul are exploring the idea of developing public, daily-fee 18-hole golf courses at two satellite airports in the city’s seven-airport system. One course is proposed for the Oronoka County-Blaine Airport on the north side of the metropolitan area. The second possible site is the Flying Cloud Airport on the west side of the metro area.

Gary Schmidt, manager of reliever airports for the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Airports Commission, said the golf courses are still in the planning stages, but he thinks they are an excellent complement to airports. “The golf courses would provide a buffer between the airport and the surrounding communities,” said Schmidt. “And it puts a desirable resource in the community that is also an alternative revenue source [for the airport authority].”

Golf course proposals are pending at or near airports in Bend, Ore.; Raleigh, N.C.; Sacramento, Calif.; and Los Angeles, where airport officials are considering a public, daily-fee 27-hole facility as part of a revised master-plan project for the international airport.

Some of the proposals and projects are driven by airport authorities looking to draw more and varied businesses onto what are often large tracts of open land surrounding the airports. Others are led by developers like Mike Rubish and his World Golf in Raleigh, N.C. Rubish plans to develop an 18-hole executive-length golf course on 80 acres near the Raleigh-Durham International Airport. He calls the project a prototype for affordable, family fun. Rubish said his facility will target business travelers awaiting airport connections. He said he would run shuttle buses from the airport to his golf facility and install airline arrival and departure monitors in the golf clubhouse.

Golf courses at airports do present a different set of considerations than other golf course projects. The siting of the course has to be done with the location and direction of the airport runways in mind. There’s also the tricky matter of the kinds of things golf courses attract besides golfers and surlyn-covered projectiles—like birds.

For the Airline Golf Club at Hattiesburg-Laurel Airport, developer Deerfield Golf and designer Rich Fulkerson agreed to a five-acre limit on water hazards and irrigation ponds. The reason for the limit is to try to minimize the amount of birds that will flock to the golf course and cause potential problems with overhead plane traffic. Fulkerson and Deerfield Golf also agreed not to build a lighted driving range because the lights could interfere with air traffic.

One proposal for a golf course near Sacramento (Calif.) International Airport did receive criticism from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). An FAA representative testified at a hearing that the golf course would attract too many birds and make it dangerous for air traffic. The proposal, however, was approved by county supervisors and is moving forward.

An FAA spokesperson based in New York said that use and development of land at airports is usually left up to local authorities and zoning laws. She said the FAA does have regulations regarding waste-disposal sites near airports, but for now, nothing specific regarding golf courses.

Most every potential golf course site creates its own set of stipulations and concessions. Many of the designers and developers involved with the current batch of proposals for golf courses at or near airports said there are lucrative incentives that could make airports a rich possibility for future course development.

“With our project we’ve got water and sewer all ready for our clubhouse,” said Fulkerson. “They already have their own security who will keep an eye on the golf course. There’s three-phase electricity just 75 to 100 yards from the pump house. These are big advantages.”

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