

BRIEFS



**TROON DEVELOPS SAVANNAH LINKS**

SAVANNAH, Ga. — Official groundbreaking took place recently for the Westin Savannah Harbor Resort, which includes an 18-hole Robert Cupp-designed course. Located on Hutchinson Island, the resort is being developed by CSX Realty Development LLC of Jacksonville, Fla., and Merritt W. Dixon III, a Savannah real-estate investor. Troon Golf of Scottsdale, Ariz., will help develop and eventually manage the golf property. Funding for the \$100 million project is being provided by Nomura Capital, a leading commercial real-estate financier. The city and county are building the 345,000-square-foot Georgia International Maritime & Trade Center immediately adjacent to the resort. Both projects are scheduled to be completed in early 1999.

**NGP SELLS NEW ORLEANS TRACK**

SANTA MONICA, Calif.— National Golf Properties Inc. announced that it has sold Stonebridge Country Club in New Orleans for approximately \$1 million. National Golf Properties acquired Stonebridge in July 1996 as part of its purchase of 20 golf courses from Golf Enterprises Inc. National Golf Properties will recognize a gain on the sale.

**PALMER NAMES TIERNEY VP**

ORLANDO, Fla. — Arnold Palmer Golf Management has named Tim Tierney vice president of operations, a position responsible for managing company-owned, managed and franchised courses. Tierney was formerly executive vice president and chief operating officer of Kona Ranch Restaurant Group. Tierney's recruitment from the restaurant industry supports Palmer Management's ongoing effort to integrate golf industry experts with professionals from other customer-driven, branded chains, according to a Palmer spokesman.

**CJH READIES OLDE SCOTLAND LINKS**

BRIDGEWATER, Mass. — Olde Scotland Links Golf Course is on schedule to open here in early August. The town-owned, 18-hole layout was designed by Cornish, Silva and Mungeam and will be managed by Corcoran Jennison Hospitality Inc. The course site was formerly full of drainage ditches and served as a stump dump, filled in some areas over 40 feet high.

MOVIN' ON UP

Eger ascends Golf Services Group's career ladder

By PETER BLAIS

Remaining flexible enough to seize opportunities and travel where those opportunities took her has been the key to Paula Eger's success.

Golf Services Group's director of golf course maintenance and agronomy has traveled the world and worked with numerous companies during her 20-plus-year golf industry career.



Paula Eger

"You have to stay flexible and find quality people to work with," said the 44-year-old executive with the Houston-based development/management firm.

[President] Jim Hardy has always given me the support I needed, but also given me the freedom to make my own decisions."

Golf has always been a part of Eger's life. Her childhood home bordered the second fairway at Greenbriar Hills near St. Louis. With her family's encouragement, she became a successful junior golfer and rode that skill to the University of Arizona, where she played on the school's golf team.

Eger wanted to design golf courses.

Continued on page 55



Rio Colorado GC in Bay City, Texas, is one of Golf Services Group's courses.

Houston management company prepares to open Tennessee tracks

By PETER BLAIS

HOUSTON — This summer's anticipated resumption of construction on the long-delayed Jack Nicklaus-designed Chickasaw State Park golf course near Jackson, Tenn. (see June *GCN*, page 6), will come as welcome news at the offices of Golf Services Group.

The Houston-based firm is developing and will eventually manage Chickasaw and the other three Nicklaus-designed, government-financed state park courses scheduled to open over the next two years in the Volunteer State. Building and running the so-called Bear Track courses — which could eventually number seven or

eight facilities and should compete with Alabama's Robert Trent Jones Trail network — will increase GSG's visibility in the golf course management industry.

"There's a tremendous need for golf courses with green fees in the \$20-to-\$30 range," said GSG President James Hardy. "The Tennessee courses will cost \$28 to \$30 and host about 36,000 rounds a year apiece."

That mid-priced, daily-fee market is GSG's target as the company grows nationwide. "There are too many courses being built for the upscale market, which I see as anything over \$60," Hardy said.

Continued on page 54

PERSONNEL CORNER

Everybody needs a Paul O'Brien

By VINCE ALFONSO

Every business needs a good product at a good price. Golf is no different. In order to succeed, we would all agree, we need good greens, good golf cars, good food, good merchandise, and all at good prices.

But, some golf organizations that have all this still don't make it. Why? Maybe it has to do with something as fundamental as sayin' "Hi, glad to see you" and meaning it.

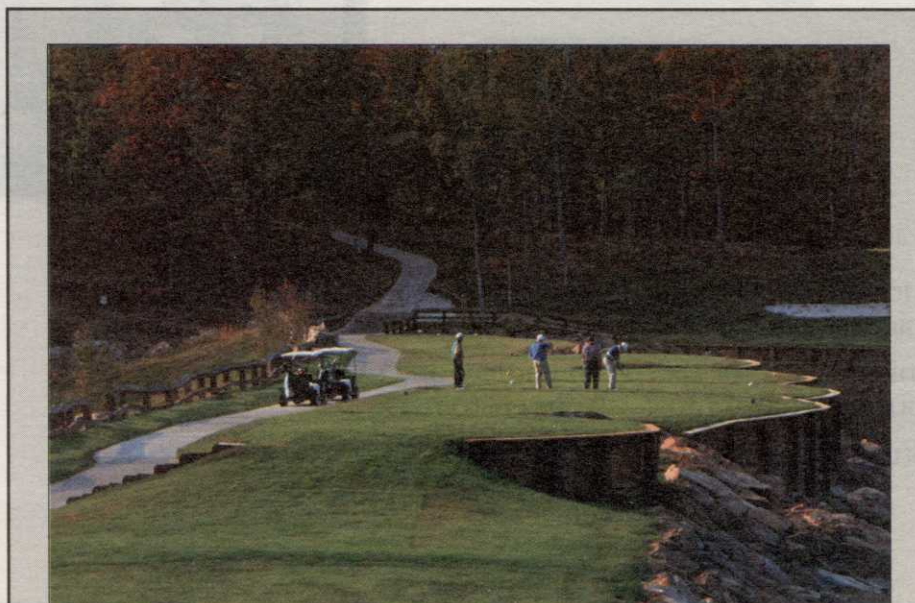
I have to admit, I have never read Sam

Walton's book. But, I'm sure that somewhere in that book, Sam talked about why he wanted a greeter at the front door of every WalMart store. He or someone on the WalMart team decided it would be good for business. In other words, they believed it would be good for the bottom line to have somebody say, "Good Morning" or "Good Afternoon" or "Good Evening", and shake the hand of every single customer, every single time they came through the door of a WalMart store.

I can't claim some revelation from studying the masters of marketing and sales, but as ya'll are keenly aware (if you read my column monthly), I did study under my dad, who I believe to be an unpublished master. So I guess I knew how important greeting your customer was, because I saw my Dad do it. He taught me by his example just how important sayin' "Hi, glad to see you" really was. I have always encouraged my employees to follow my lead in this area, but I prayed I would someday find someone who truly understood its importance the way my Dad did.

In late spring 1983, my prayers were answered when a gentleman named Paul O'Brien made an appointment to see me.

Continued on page 56



MARTTY EXPANDS INTO 'BAMA

Martty Golf Management (MGM) has signed a management contract with Cherokee Ridge Country Club in Union Grove, Ala., a private club and residential community near Huntsville. The 7,000-yard championship layout hosts the Nike Tour's Alabama Classic. MGM will manage and market the club.

Vince Alfonso Jr. is a 40-year golf-industry veteran, president of Alfonso Creative Enterprises Inc., and owner of Kimberling Golf Course near Branson, Mo. He can be reached at 417-739-4370.

## Golf Services

Continued from page 49

GSG provides course owners and developers with five related services: project and construction management, golf course operations and maintenance, advisory, design and renovation services.

The company currently manages or will build/manage nine projects — five under develop-

ment and four that have already opened. In addition to the 40-year leases on Tennessee state park facilities at Cumberland Mountain (Crossville, opening October), Harrison Bay (Chattanooga, opening 1998), Tim's Ford (Winchester, opening 1998 or 1999) and Chickasaw (opening 1999), GSG projects include:

- Managing Rio Colorado GC, Bay City, Texas, for developer

Charles Hurwitz.

- Managing Waterwood National CC, Huntsville, Texas, for developer Allstate Insurance Co.

- Building an exclusive, 36-hole Rees Jones-designed private club for the Houstonian Hotel and Athletic Club in Houston.

- Starting construction this summer on a GSG-developed, 18-hole, Peter Jacobsen/Jim Hardy-designed course in Houston.

*The company currently manages or will build/manage nine projects — five under development and four that have already opened.*

- Completing the first nine this summer and starting construction soon on another 18 GSG-designed holes at Green Hills GC in Chowchilla, Calif.
- Project managing an 18-hole,

Jacobsen/Hardy-designed private club called The Oaks in Nicolus, Calif., that should open in early 1998.

Hardy, an Oklahoma State University graduate with more than 30 years of golf industry experience, founded Golf Services in 1987 as a consulting company that offered, at that time, an unusual product — short-term, project-management contracts.

"Most real-estate developers," Hardy recalled, "wanted professional help, but could only get it through long-term management contracts. We offered short-term arrangements, as little as 60 to 90 days, if that was what was needed."

The consulting part of the business grew, with organizations like Levanthol & Horwath and the U.S. Army and Air Force contracting Golf Services to conduct feasibility, market and other financial studies. Eventually GSG evolved into a more traditional management firm specializing in the development of new projects rather than acquisitions.

"We're very experienced in taking a course from the initial development stages through opening and into daily operation," Hardy said. "We're not a turnaround company or mass marketer. We are very entrepreneurial and very hands-on."

Hardy relies heavily on a professional staff that includes partner Bill Wallace, a Certified Public Accountant, who directs the company's financial reporting and accounting functions. GSG and Jacobsen/Hardy Design Group, a sister firm, also benefit from the input of Jacobsen, LPGA golfer Carol Mann, Director of Golf Course Maintenance and Agronomy Paula Eger, design associate Shari Doiron, General Manager Nancy Bunton and Vice President of Project Development Carl Brown.

As for the future, Hardy sees the golf course management industry continuing to grow and consolidate, although he predicts Golf Services will neither be acquired by a larger firm nor acquire other management firms.

"We don't have any ambition to become the next ClubCorp," the company president said. "We'd like to have 10 to 20 courses eventually, with an equity position in each. And we'll likely develop them ourselves. Although we're open to acquiring an existing course, finding the right one at a good price is tough to do. When you know what you're doing, development is a wise thing. Why buy someone else's mistakes?"

GOLF COURSE NEWS



8 AM • TEMP 90° • HUMIDITY 95%  
(and the mycelium is growing)

**WHEN YOU HAVE TO SUIT UP AND SPRAY, 'INFERNO' WOULD BE THE NICEST WORD FOR A DAY LIKE THIS.**



Toro Multi Pro 5500 with new air-conditioned cab.

**UNTIL NOW.** The world's best sprayer just became the coolest. The Toro Multi Pro® 5500 now comes with an optional air-conditioned cab and a charcoal filtering system that allows cleaner, cooler air to circulate throughout the cab. So spraying even in the worst heat and humidity is a breeze. You can even add the cab to a Multi Pro® 5500 you already have. For more information see your local Toro Distributor, or visit our website at [www.toro.com](http://www.toro.com).

**TORO**

*It's about playability™*



© 1997 The Toro Company, 8111 Lyndale Avenue South, Bloomington, Minnesota 55420.