Non-profit formed to protect water rights in Arizona's stingy supply

By PETER BLAIS

PHOENIX — Protecting the Arizona golf industry's water rights is one of the main purposes of the Golf Industry Association (GIA), a new non-profit corporation formed to preserve the quality and promote the growth of the game across the state. "There is a significant need for this type of united advocacy on behalf of the game of golf," said Tom Patrick, president of the GIA and vice president of Phoenix-based SunCor Resort and Golf Management.

"Over the years, golf has made tremendous contributions to the quality of life in Arizona. However, recently many legislative and regulatory issues have arisen which could adversely affect all levels of our industry as well as the spirit of the game."

Many of those legislative and regulatory issues have revolved around water. Strict regulations limit the amount of irrigated turf on Arizona courses, Patrick noted. However, a recent University of Arizona study indicates that traditional formulas for estimating golf course water use may be faulty.

"The study indicates we need to look at increasing golf course allocations," the GIA president said. "The test plots used to estimate water use don't take into account the edge effect of having golf courses border the desert. On a golf course, there's nothing to stop the