Officials of Chesterfield County, which borders Richmond to the south, voted 4-1 on May 27 to accept the Richmond First Tee Foundation's proposal to build an 18-hole golf course designed with youths in mind, along with a practice range and three-hole "tot" course. It will occupy 140 of the park's 360 acres and will be leased for 20 years to the foundation, with two successive 10-year renewals.

Chesterfield County's approval of the project follows an attempt by Richmond First Tee Foundation to build the facility within city limits. Organized by Richmond native Fred Tattersall, the foundation hoped to open by Memorial Day 1999 and be the nation's first First Tee. But when talks with city officials bogged down and threatened that early opening, Chesterfield officials came forward.

"Frankly, we've been through such a battle to work a public-private partnership that we've lost a little interest in whether we're first in the country," said Tattersall, an investment counselor and money fund manager. "We just want to build it."

"What sold this course is that it's designed to teach youths how to play and it will be good for senior golf," said Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation Department Director Mike Golden. "Like the idea it's in line with the other youth sports facilities we have. A kid can go and play golf, soccer, football, baseball, or tennis. It might be one, one day and one the next. Or a family can go one or two play golf, while the rest are at soccer practice. It's not uncommon for that to happen in other ways now."

Iron Bridge Park, Tattersall said, "is everything you would hope for in a park."

Besides that, it is located in seemingly a perfect position. Last year 440,000 people came to the park during the year. More than 1,100 youths live in the neighborhoods next to the park. There are 11 elementary schools, eight middle schools and four high schools within a 7-mile radius. And reportedly there are 4,000 people living in the poverty level in Chesterfield County.

"We think we've tapped into a great location," Tattersall said. "It's not an issue of moving to the wealthy suburbs of Richmond."

Richmond, meanwhile, was listed in July's Golf Digest as the worst of 309 small, medium and large U.S. cities for golfers because of its lack of facilities.

"It's going to be a spectacular project," said Tod Leiweke, executive director of the national First Tee program. "We have a deeply committed group there who have fought through an arduous public process, they're doing it for the right reasons and they're well organized."

Leiweke could not say whether Richmond's will be the first "from-scratch" facility to open. "We have 11 facilities that are extremely active," he said. "They are a mixed bag — a couple existing facilities to expand, a couple that are smaller, etc."

The layout of Chesterfield County's First Tee course, designed by Lester George of Colonial Design.

The Richmond First Tee Foundation has been working with local YMCA, Police Athletic League and Boys and Girls clubs, who have assured they will handle transportation to Iron Gate Park. It is 1-1/2 miles from a major YMCA summer camp that brings in a number of inner-city children and children at risk.

"The hope from the Y's standpoint and ours," Tattersall said, "is to offer the kids another alternative in the summertime."

Golden added that the county Parks and Recreation Department will schedule golf classes and outings at The First Tee facility through the school system.

Location was one of the sticking points with Richmond officials, who preferred one site over the property the foundation and PGA Tour wanted.

The foundation, which is handling the development without any cost to the county, may still partner with Richmond for a city facility, Tattersall said:

"We are still talking to the city and plan to have a site within the city," he said. "It obviously will not be done as quickly as had we been able to agree on matters earlier in the year. But, all along we thought multiple sites were preferable. Once you ask people to go further than 10 miles, it becomes not only a public-transportation issue, but a time issue."

When the Iron Park facility opens — a news event the foundation hopes to announce the improvements to either an existing facility or other site in the city, Tattersall said:

Meanwhile, one reason to be the first facility developed from inception to be a First Tee layout, is that it can better tap into celebrities and public relations supplied by the PGA Tour, PGA of America, World Golf Foundation, Ladies PGA, U.S. Golf Association and others who are supporting the First Tee program.

A number of communities, existing courses and individuals are involved in refurbishing existing facilities. Here in Richmond, Tattersall and the foundation have raised $2.5 million from private individuals — $2 million to build the course and $500,000 to operate the program for five years, after which it hopefully will be self-sustaining.

Others are contributing as well. Among them:

• course architect Lester George of Colonial Design in Richmond is designing the complex;
• golf course builder Quality Grassing & Services of Lithia, Fla., will bill the foundation as normal, then return the profits as a donation;
• Timmons Engineering, a local firm, is donating engineering services;
• Williamsburg (Va.) Environmental Group, Inc., is consulting on environmental issues at no charge;
• local lawyer John Coblentz is handling legal issues gratis.
• PGA Tour player and broadcaster Robert Wrenn of Richmond is donating time to give clinics and as a consultant.
• Mike Snyder of Photogrammetric Data Services in Charlotte, N.C., is providing aerial mapping and contour mapping services for free.

There was opposition to the proposal, leading to marathon county board meetings — one lasting until 1:30 a.m. and another to 4:45 a.m. Some 75 citizens spoke at the last session, half of them opposing the facility. Golden said mountain biking trails that will be displaced by The First Tee will be replaced with new trails to be built elsewhere. To neighbors who objected, he said that if the First Tee were not built, the land would be turned to lighted sports fields 10 years ahead.

WASHINGTON — Patrick Shea, director of the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management, and Tim Finchem, commissioner of the PGA Tour and chairman of the World Golf Foundation, have signed a memorandum of understanding pledging to provide more opportunities for minorities and young people to explore careers in the golf industry, with an emphasis on environmental issues associated with the sport.

"This agreement will help bring one of the most wholesome, character-building, outdoor recreation activities to a more diverse America in a fashion that is environmentally friendly," said Shea.

"This partnership between the World Golf Foundation and the BLM, with its world-class outdoor recreation program, is extremely important to our efforts to identify locations for the development of First Tee facilities," Finchem said. "The BLM has been a strong supporter of golf and shares The First Tee's vision of creating golf facilities that provide affordable access for everyone, with a special emphasis on youth and minorities."

The memorandum of understanding is a product of the efforts that are an integral part of a national golf initiative supported by a host of organizations, including the PGA Tour, LPGA, PGA of America, Augusta National Golf Club and The Tiger Woods Foundation.

Leiweke is also designed to help make the game of golf more accessible to youth, particularly those from inner cities.

The BLM historically is one of the most golf-friendly federal agencies. Over the last 45 years it has taken actions authorized under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act of 1954 that have led to the creation of 40 golf facilities, including courses in such cities as Phoenix, Las Vegas, Albuquerque and Santa Fe, N.M., Portland, Ore., St. George, Utah, and Bismarck, N.D.

BLM is empowered under law to lease or provide title to federal lands to governmental entities at no cost when those lands are used for recreational or public purposes, such as golfing. The BLM is the largest land management agency in the country, with responsibilities for 268 million acres of surface land and about 508 million acres of subsurface mineral estate.

The four-page agreement specifically provides for the BLM to:

• Participate in activities that encourage inner-city and other youth to both play golf and pursue golf as recreational or career opportunities.
• Encourage golf facilities to operate in a manner supportive of wildlife;
• Develop criteria and management practices jointly with The First Tee initiative to encourage environment-friendly management of golf facilities;
• Cooperate with the World Golf Foundation and other organizations to promote and facilitate the development of First Tee facilities.
Beauty from ashes
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A.W. Tillinghast and Devereux Emmet was a fine nine designed by Alfred Tull,
Continued from page 29
land. Neighboring DuPont, however, did own enough property and leased it to
Beauty from ashes
huge pile of coal ash, but also working DuPont Nylon North America.
Environmental Excellence Award for
c coal ash as fill," Mandell said, "then added DuPont, he said, "It's a sandy
loam. "It's a decent growing medium, but
1-foot cap
Mandell and Rauch added contour by
12 feet of fall from one end to the other.
Mandell said, "With only 12 feet of
positive drainage. We had to finagle the
earth to make it drain."
Whole in One built two large ridges to create
towering terrain. In many places it is
20 feet high, and a 40-foot-high berm runs
along the 17th hole, blocking the view of
the factory parking lot. And pipes inter-
connect the five ponds to maintain the
water level.
The result — a 5,505- to 6,612-yard,
par-72 18 holes with bentgrass greens
and ryegrass tees and fairways.
Meanwhile, Whole in One opened a second
course on May 2: an 18-hole executive
track that joins a Lindsay Ervin-designed
nine-hole par-3 at Greenfields Golf Park in
Berlin, Md., outside Ocean City.
General Manager Phil Colbert and Di-
rector of Golf Buddy Sass own the facility
and plan to have Whole in One add a nine-
hole regulation course at some time in the
future.
The new executive course plays to a
par 6 and ranges from 5,877 to 5,210
yards.
Because of a tight site, Mandell and
Rauch designed one triple tee and a
13,000-square-foot double green.
We built really neat greens and a lot of
bunkers for protection," Mandell said,
adding that golfers will use all the clubs
in the bag when they face par-3s greatly
varying in distance, seven par-4s, the long-
est is 405 from the back. Two long par 5s:
590 and 575.

New Vista Bella owner hires Snyder, Richardson
KINGMAN, Ariz. — Golf course archi-
teurs Arthur Jack Snyder and Forrest
Richardson have been selected to design
Vista Bella Golf Course here. An 18-hole
regulation layout previously announced
by Gary Panks, Vista Bella has under-
gone an ownership change along with
significant site plan and routing revisions.
The objective was to work with the previous
site plan, yet add new thinking that would
better suit the growing Kingman market.
New design plans reduce the
project's reliance on ground water with
less formal turf areas, and feature fewer
on-course lakes.
"Things are changing fast in Kingman," said Richardson. "Our goal is to develop a
course with tremendous character, yet pre-
serve at all cost the charm and simplicity
that makes Kingman such a unique place.
Snyder described the Vista Bella site as
having "views so spacious and beautiful it
can be difficult to keep your mind on the
game. In any direction one gets the feel-
ing the view just goes on forever."
The course is scheduled to begin con-
struction this year as part of improve-
ments to new phases of the Vista Bella
master-planned community. PrimeStyle
Development Inc., of Phoenix, is the
owner/developer.

Valparaiso moves ahead on course, training center for youth
VALPARAISO, Ind. — Don Childs Associates (DCA) will
master plan a golf course and training center for the city here
in a project aimed at drawing a younger audience.
"We believe we are the first municipality in the nation
to successfully take the golf training center concept as
embraced by the Tiger Woods, First Tee, and Hook-a-Kid Founda-
tions to the construction phase," said John Seibert, direc-
tor of Parks and Recreation for Valparaiso. "Our staff has
been working hard for two years on this project from initial
ideas to where we are today. With founding and council
approvals in place, we are targeting construction to start in
late August, with all aspects of the facility open in the
spring of 2000."
The City Council has approved the project and the sale of
$3.3 million in municipal revenue bonds to pay for develop-
ment and construction.
The teaching and training center will feature a 55-station
range, putting course, chipping green and sand bunker,
and a three-hole training course with par-3, -4, and -5 golf holes.
The clubhouse will be designed to feature an indoor teaching
center with state-of-the-art video equipment for instruction
and swing analysis.
Meanwhile, DCA will soon be designing the new headquar-
ters and training center of the Minority Golf Association
of America (MGAA) in Miami. Developers of the site are poised
to break ground later this summer with the facility fully
operational in 2000. The academy is the project of Tibor
Hollo, Hank Thomas, and John David, president of the MGAA.