A course a year; that's all they're asking at Wilson

By PETER BLAIS

WHITE BEAR LAKE, Minn. — Wilson Golf Group (WGG) has acquired Turtleback Golf Court in Rice Lake, Wis., giving the White Bear Lake-based management firm seven golf facilities in the Upper Midwest.

Wilson plans to retain the current management staff at the destination resort including General Manager Scott Maanum and Superintendent Todd Severud.

“We're trying to acquire a course per year,” said Greg Stang, WGG’s director of acquisitions.

WGG courses include four in Minnesota and two in Colorado. The Minnesota facilities are Oak Glen and Applewood Hills in Stillwater, Gem Lake Hills in White Bear Lake and North Links in North Mankato. The Colorado tracks are 15 miles apart on the Western Slope — Adobe Creek in Fruita and Chipeta in Grand Junction. The company also owns a piece of land outside St. Paul that will see construction of course No. 8 within the next 18 months, Stang said.

With four Minnesota courses apiece, WGG, Continental Golf Group and Americas Golf will be among the largest course operators in that Upper Midwest state. “There are a couple others [management firms] that have started up that have one or two on hand,” Stang said.

The company’s founder, who Stang declined to identify, purchased Gem Lake 10 years ago. A couple years later, through some family contacts, he purchased some land in Colorado and built a course there. He acquired the remaining facilities over the past four years.

“A year ago we decided we needed a little different structure to go after this market,” Stang said. “It started as a single owner with a single operation. He's given us the go-ahead to expand and take it where we'd like to.”

Each WGG course has an individual management team and that team is free to target a specific market, Stang said. All the facilities are public and range in size from 27-hole expansive putting green. BCGM will give GGP a total of 19 courses.

Family Golf buys SkateNation for $29M

MELVILLE, N.Y. — Family Golf Centers Inc. said it agreed to buy ice rink operator SkateNation Inc. for $29 million as it seeks to offset the seasonal nature of its core golf course business.

Family Golf Centers, which runs more than 110 golf and recreation centers in the United States and Canada, will acquire all of the capital stock of SkateNation for $17 million in cash and $12 million in debt. SkateNation, a unit of Toronto-based TrizecHahn Corp., owns or manages 23 ice rinks and recreation centers in 11 U.S. states. TrizecHahn is one of North America's largest real estate companies.

Family Golf, which has traditionally focused on golf courses, plans to develop ice rinks and recreation centers to strengthen its year-round revenue.

The Eagle has landed: On Normandie

ST. LOUIS — Eagle Golf Properties, Inc., a golf course investment company, has signed a long-term lease for Normandie Golf Club, an 18-hole facility located in St. Louis. The course opened in 1901 and is reportedly the oldest course west of the Mississippi. The course will be managed by Eagle Golf Services, LLC.

Richard J. Stahlhuth, managing director of Eagle Golf Services, LLC, said, “significant improvements will be commenced immediately to facilitate the return of Normandie Golf Club to prominence in the golf community as one of the first class courses in St. Louis.”

Eagle Golf Services, LLC, currently manages Quail Creek Golf Club and Lakewood Golf Club in St. Louis, Cottonwood Golf Club in DeSoto, Mo., and The Cape Golf and Racquet Club in Wilmington, N.C.

Meadowbrook acquires Orlando facility

KISSIMMEE, Fla. — Meadowbrook Golf Group, Inc. has acquired Ekana Golf Club, an 18-hole, par-72 course in Oviedo, Fla., approximately 20 minutes from downtown Orlando. Ekana is an upscale semi-private club designed by architect Joe Lee. Ekana Golf Club is situated on the Econfinahatchee River and is an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Member. The acquisition is part of Meadowbrook’s plan of acquiring $100 million of golf course properties.