

BRIEFS



PALMER TO MANAGE CASTLE HILLS

DALLAS — Jay Morrish-designed Golf Club at Castle Hills will open for play here in June with Arnold Palmer Golf Management operating the facility, including the nation's fifth Arnold Palmer Golf Academy. The Castle Hills development partnership is comprised of Olympus Real Estate Corp., a Hicks Muse affiliate, and Castle Hills Golf Partners Ltd., headed by Ray Wicken and Joe Cotter.

PAYSON TO DIRECT ARIZ. CLUB

PAYSON, Ariz.—The Rim Golf Club, a new Lyon Golf-managed club in Payson, recently named Robert Irving its director of golf. Irving has 27 years experience in the golf industry including 12 years as director of golf for The Boulders Golf Resort in Carefree, Ariz. and nine years as head golf professional for La Jolla Country Club in La Jolla, California.

FAMILY GOLF ADDS 3

MELVILLE, N.Y.—Family Golf Centers, Inc. has acquired the Thunder Bay Golf Dome in Thunder Bay, Ontario and the Vaughn Golf Club in Toronto. The company has also entered into a long-term lease to operate the 82nd Avenue Driving Range in Portland, Ore. In addition, in early Family Golf Centers recently opened its newly constructed state-of-the-art golf center in Shelton, Conn.

MAINE, VT. COURSES CHANGE HANDS

A pair of Northern New England courses recently changed hands. Dick Dennison sold nine-hole Rivermeadow Golf Club (GC) in Westbrook, Maine, to R.J. Golf of Worcester, Mass. for \$850,000. Norm Burnett of Aurora, Colo., purchased 18-hole Rocky Ridge GC near Burlington, Vt., from Janice Hayes for \$1.85 million. J.A. Canfield Co. of Glen, N.H., represented the seller in both cases.

RAVEN ASSUMES SANDESTIN REINS

DESTIN, Fla.—Phoenix-based Raven Golf recently assumed management of The Resort at Sandestin's golf facility, a 63-hole layout located on the Gulf Coast of the Florida Panhandle. The management agreement with The Resort at Sandestin is part of Raven Golf's merger with Intrawest, a Vancouver, British Columbia-based company who has ownership in nine mountain resorts and nine championship courses throughout the United States and Canada.

Legislation would preserve caddie's independent status

The National Club Association (NCA) announced that key segments of the golf community have sent a unified message to Congress urging lawmakers to pass legislation that would preserve the independent contractor status of caddies.

The letter was signed by 124 groups and organizations including



key golf organizations; club organizations; state and local golf associations; caddie scholarship programs; and

a number of golf/country clubs. Sue Wegrzyn, NCA executive vice president, stated: "The golf community's response to this issue has been tremendous. The united stance on the caddie legislation should help advance this issue in the months ahead."

Preserving the independent contractor status of caddies is a top legislative priority for the NCA in the 106th Congress. The Caddie Relief Act of 1999, H.R. 19, was introduced earlier this year by Rep. Dan Burton (R-Ind.) and has garnered bipartisan support in recent months.

NCA also formed the Coalition to Preserve Caddie Programs in 1996. Composed of over 50 state and regional golf associations, caddie scholarship programs, and interested individuals, the coalition has been instrumental in providing critical grass roots support on this issue.

ClubCorp acquires two new courses

Joint development venture with Nicklaus starts to bear fruit

DALLAS—ClubCorp has acquired clubs in Granite Bay, Calif., and Palm City, Fla.

The 530-member Granite Bay Golf Club, located outside Sacramento, was designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr. Built in 1993, the club was acquired from Daniel Reiner, Granite Bay, Ltd.

Built in 1996, Golden Bear Golf Club at Hammock Creek in Palm City, Fla., north of West Palm Beach, was acquired from Jack Nicklaus' Golden Bear International. The course was designed by Nicklaus and his son, Jack Nicklaus II. The semi-private club has a clubhouse, pro shop and dining facilities.

The two acquisitions follow the recent announcement of a joint venture between

ClubCorp and Jack Nicklaus' Golden Bear International to design, build, own and operate as many as three dozen Nicklaus signature courses around the world in the next 10 years. Golden Bear International, owned by the Nicklaus family and based in North Palm Beach, Fla., will design the courses, and Dallas-based ClubCorp will manage the courses and country clubs.

The joint venture has two new clubs under development, the first at Birch River in Dahlonega, Ga., and the other

at LionsGate in Overland Park, Kan. Other targeted metropolitan areas are Dallas, Las Vegas, Orlando, Palm Springs, Calif., Phoenix; and San Antonio, Texas.



WESTERN GOLF ADDS COURSE

Western Golf Properties has assumed management of Red Hawk Ridge Golf Course, an 18-hole, Jim Engh design that held its grand opening this spring in Castle Rock, Colo.

Private clubs seek to become employer of choice

By PETER BLAIS

SAN FRANCISCO — With a few changes, private clubs can become the most attractive employers in their communities, even in today's robust economy, according to Tarun Kapoor, a professor in the school of hotel and restaurant management at California Polytechnic University.

"The private club industry is fighting its own history and tradition," Kapoor told a group during the recent Club Managers Association of America annual conference here. "You haven't tried to build your image within the community, but rather tried to keep that image private."

"You haven't shared who you are for reasons that may have been very valid 10 to 50 years ago, but won't be valid for

the next 10 years. There needs to be a philosophical shift in the way you do business."

Successful clubs differentiate themselves in a positive manner from every other club in their community, Kapoor explained, and customer service is the major point of differentiation. So, club managers should focus their energy on their front-line employees, the service providers. They are the deliverers of the *club experience* and must have a positive mental attitude about their jobs and work environment to deliver a quality experience to members and customers.

There are three pieces to the employee productivity puzzle. First, a club must pay a living wage that at least gets an

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Clubs weigh in with suggestions to find, keep good employees

By PETER BLAIS

SAN FRANCISCO — Several successful ideas for recruiting and keeping quality employees were on display at the Idea Fair at the recent Club Managers Association of America Annual Conference here.

Among the best:

- *Employee Recruitment Incentive Plan*, Peninsula Golf & Country Club, San Mateo, Calif. — Assistant Manager Gregory Webb found that a job ad in a local major metropolitan daily newspaper cost \$833 or almost \$5,000 to run for a week. Experience showed the club rarely hired those who responded to the ad, or no one answered the ad at all.

The club decided to dip into its own labor pool to help recruit new hires. Under the *Employee Recruitment Incentive Plan*, existing employees who recruit a new worker receive \$150 one month after the new person is hired. The referring employee receives another \$150 if the recruit is still on the job after six months. The incentive makes the referring employee happier and gives him/her a reason to encourage the new hire to stay on the job for at least six months. And the \$300 paid the referring employee is much less than the club would have spent for the newspaper ad.

- *WOW Award*, Omaha (Neb.) Country Club — WOW

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Recruiting

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stands for *Watchful Open and Willing* to go beyond what is expected. To receive a *WOW* award, an employee must be recognized by a member, manager or fellow employee for going above and beyond the call of the employee's regular duties. Award winners receive a certificate and a gift from the pro shop for each award, which are distributed during scheduled management/staff meetings.

Awards are categorized by department (e.g. maintenance, pro shop, food and beverage) and at the end of each year, the employee with the most awards in each department is inducted into the *WOW* Hall of Fame. Hall of Fame inductees are recognized at an annual employee appreciation dinner, given a large monetary gift and have their names inscribed on a *WOW* Hall of Fame plaque that is displayed for members to view.

• *Employee Recognition Fund*, Hollyburn Country Club, Vancouver, B.C. — The *Employee Recognition Fund* was first implemented in 1989 to encourage long-term service, promote employee morale and recognize outstanding performance on the part of all staff members.

Every April and October, members are assessed \$20 per family to finance the fund. The fund is administered by the general manager who, with input from members and staff, recognizes outstanding efforts on the part of employees through educational seminars, social functions and other awards.

Long-time service awards are presented at five years (\$200 Waterford crystal clock); 10 years (\$300 personal gift certificate); and 15 years (\$400 gift certificate).

Staff functions have included bowling, curling, golf, picnics and Christmas parties.

Among the awards have been tickets to such sporting events as Vancouver Canucks hockey, Grizzlies basketball, 86ers soccer, and B.C. Lions football games; cultural events such as the Vancouver Symphony and live theater presentations; Thanksgiving turkey vouchers; dining certificates; and movie passes.

Employees are also awarded \$30 for any suggestion that is implemented by the club.

• *Employee "Outlook" Newsletter and Day of Relaxation*, Country Club of Virginia, Richmond, Va. — *Outlook* is distributed monthly along with employee paychecks. It includes news on employee accomplishments, work anniversaries, current CC of Virginia events, and contests with incentives to participate.

An occasional *Day of Relaxation*

entitles all employees to a 20-minute massage by the club's in-house massage therapist. The therapist partitions off a portion of the club office and uses a portable massage chair. Therapists receive their normal commission for the time worked.



ServiceMaster acquires course maintenance firm

MICHIGAN CITY, Ind. — ServiScape Inc., a golf course maintenance management company and subsidiary of Houston-based LandCare, USA, a national provider of landscape and tree services, has been purchased by The ServiceMaster Company of Downers Grove, Ill.

According to Peter Sinnott, ServiScape's president, "Our current golf course customers will also benefit through expanded services

and increased purchasing power for supplies and maintenance equipment."

ServiScape manages the golf course maintenance operations for a number of courses including The Dunes Club in New Buffalo, Mich. and Harborside International in Chicago. ServiScape is also involved in agronomic and course construction management with Bandon Dunes in Bandon, Ore.

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