Some architects using own construction divisions

Continued from page 29

Clients have become more aware of how courses get built and are much more sophisticated than they used to be... Most of our clients are quick to accept that combination.

The majority of the people involved in the Rulewich Group come from construction backgrounds.

"We have seven shareholders who are part of the Roger Rulewich Group," Rulewich said. "Five of them are involved more with construction than design. All seven of us were with [Robert Trent] Jones [Sr.]!"

Rulewich's construction services work particularly well on renovation projects. "Remodeling is probably the place where the idea works best because we can work quickly, efficiently and we're right there with it... Most of our remodeling projects start small but end up expanding into something bigger once the clients see how well everything goes," Rulewich said.

Working directly with the architect's construction team can also minimize the type of work-order changes that usually result in higher construction costs. "The promise we make when we work on Alabama's Robert Trent Jones Trail and held onto the machin- builders for their projects, while 57.2 percent rules keep changing," said Rick Robbins of Cary, builders will stop the growth — although both replied it is not difficult.

But Lloyd Clifton of Deltona, Fla., was one of those who couldn't act as builders, too. "I started on a box blade and ended up on dozers. When you couldn't speak the language and explain something to someone, it was often easier to climb on a machine and try to show them what you wanted to accomplish," Kirby left in 1986 and Griffiths signed on to do a project for an Atlanta developer who had little use for architects who couldn't act as builders, too. "It was one of those deals we had to do, the first course at Chateau Elan in 1988," Griffiths said. "But it made sense to accomplish." Griffiths remembered. "I started on a box blade and ended up on dozers. When you couldn't speak the language and explain something to someone, it was often easier to climb on a machine and try to show them what you wanted to accomplish.""Lohmann rarely gets involved in the landscape company that does golf course work," he said. "It's a turkney situation that allows me to satisfy the developer who wants to make sure the job turns out right at a guaranteed price. We can give the developer a plan and promise that it will cost this much and no more.

Being the builder also gives Lohmann the chance to get into and out of a job quickly, without having to deal with an outside contractor.

Since many renovation jobs are done when play is at a minimum — i.e. off season or after dark — speed is important. "It's just me and the owner," Lohmann said. "We know what we need to do and we just get it done."

Lohmann estimates Golf Creations is involved with half the jobs he designs. The rest are done by golf course builders.

Lohmann's regular construction crew consists of three shapers, three superintendents and a seasonal crew that peaks at 40. His equipment includes tractors, skid loaders, trowelers, small bulldozers (the biggest is a D-4). Dump trucks are rented or the task subcontracted out.

ARCHITECTS SURVEY

Wetlands regs, financing get mixed reviews

BY MARK LESLIE

As developers fire down the home stretch towards opening more than 400 courses for the third consecutive year, it appears neither wetlands regulations nor finding enough good builders will stop the growth — although both may hamper it a bit. On the other hand, easier financing may expand opportunities.

A Golf Course News survey of course architects discovered that 42.8 percent of those polled it is getting difficult to find qualified golf course builders for their projects, while 57.2 percent replied it is not difficult.

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Frequently, the superintendent asked the question: "What is the price and if we build it, no matter how much we have to change it 14 times, it's our money, not yours," he said.

ROBERT ROBBINS

Robbins' construction firm is a rather low-key affair that evolved from the Georgian's love of automobiles and anything mechanical.

In the early 1970s and 1980s, Griffiths and then-partner Ron Kirby dabbled in the construction arena, but more to satisfy Griffiths' passion for machinery than to embark on a new venture.

"We did a lot of work out of the country, which gave me the opportunity to climb on a lot of machinery," Griffiths remembered. "I started on a box blade and ended up on dozers. When you couldn't speak the language and explain something to someone, it was often easier to climb on a machine and try to show them what you wanted to accomplish.""Lohmann rarely gets involved in the landscape company that does golf course work," he said. "It's a turkney situation that allows me to satisfy the developer who wants to make sure the job turns out right at a guaranteed price. We can give the developer a plan and promise that it will cost this much and no more.

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GOLF COURSE NEWS

Wetland rules generally require a full 404 Permit, which can take one year to obtain. Complete avoidance is the goal in design, although usually that is not feasible. "The regulations are "slowing down the permit process at all levels," said Bobby Weed of Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla."

But Lloyd Clifton of Deltona, Fla., was one of the 43 percent who reported "no change in the time frame" with the new regulations.

And in some places there is actual encouragement.

"Regulations are speeding the process somewhat," said Scott Appleget of Signature Course Design in Stuart, Fla. "Misinformation from environmentalists is a major cause of slow permitting and planning."

Perry Dye of Denver reported: "It depends on the state and the circumstances. Everyone is gaining experience in mitigating these conditions, so the process moves faster, more professionally."

"It is slowing down out of state, but here in Michigan it seems to be the same as before — not too slow," said Lorrie Viola of West Bloomfield.