

BRIEFS



NEW MGT. AT NC'S CRAMER MT.

CRAMERTON, N.C. — Granite Mountain, Inc. (a subsidiary of Granite Golf Group, Inc.) has turned over management of Cramer Mountain Country Club here to Cramer Mountain Country Club Corp. Granite left the upscale private country club before the lease expired. Its owner will again operate Cramer Mountain as it has since its inception in 1986. Cramer has named the following people to its management team: Stephen Olliff, golf course superintendent; Marie Revels, general manager; Dean Huffman, executive chef; Brian Singsank, food and beverage manager; Caroline Gallrein, membership director; Christy Perrin, banquet manager; David Scalzi, head golf professional; and Dee Rathod, head tennis professional.

FNA OFFERS NEW LOAN PROGRAM

First National of America, one of the largest principal lenders to the golf industry, is now accepting applications for smaller loans. Managing Director Jerry Sager said FNA's intentions are to offer five-to-20-year domestic loans of \$250,000 to \$1.5 million.



"These loans are designed for someone who wants to buy a driving range or a small course, equipment or just for working capital requirements,"

said Sager. From application to commitment, the process takes 10 days, with another 20 days to closing. For further information, contact Sager at 908-604-4700 or visit the FNA website at <http://www.firstNA.com>.

SERVISCAPE ADDS IND. FACILITY

MICHIGAN CITY, Ind. — The North Township of Lake County has contracted ServiScape, Inc., to manage the golf course maintenance operations and course improvements planning at the 18-hole Wicker Memorial Park Golf Course.

SNOOK JOINS TEXTRON

Textron Financial named Andrew Snook director. European business development, for its golf finance and resort receivables divisions.

CROWN ACQUIRES NJ LAYOUT

CAPE MAY COURTHOUS, N.J. — Crown Golf Properties has acquired Stone Harbor Golf Course here.



Bergstol's Empire Golf flies public golf banner in NY, NJ

By PETER BLAIS

NEW YORK CITY — Developer Eric Bergstol, 43, has formed Empire Golf, an umbrella organization that will oversee financing, design, development, management, supervision and maintenance of a number of high-end, daily-fee courses primarily in New York and New Jersey.

Among the courses in the Empire Golf network are New Jersey National Golf Club in Basking Ridge, N.J.; Minisceongo

Developer Eric Bergstol, left, has formed Empire Golf, a management firm that includes several New York and New Jersey courses including Pine Barren GC below.



Golf Club in Pomona, N.Y.; and Pine Barrens Golf Club (which Bergstol designed himself) in Jackson, N.J. Scheduled to open this fall are Pine Hill (N.J.) Golf Club and Links at Madison Green in Royal Palm Beach, Fla.

Bergstol is a longtime residential/commercial developer who has been developing golf courses for the past 10 years. In addition to the above courses, he was involved in development of Hudson National in Westchester County, N.Y.; is co-developing a course under construction called Twisted Dunes near Atlantic City, N.J.; is seeking permits for a course he designed in Bayonne, N.J.; has laid out a 27-hole course at the entrance to Long Beach Island near Exit 63 of the Garden State Parkway; and has a course in the planning stages in Portland, N.Y. He also plans to add two or three more courses in Florida.

"The metropolitan New York area has been deprived in regard to real, quality public golf," Bergstol said. "You have some of the best private courses in the country here, but I've always believed the public should have the opportunity to play quality golf courses."

"The concept I like to promote is the private club for a day. I want people who play public golf courses to get a feel of what it's like to play a world-class course."

Bergstol believes Northern New Jersey's dense population, high incomes, professional work force, and lack of quality public facilities make it an attractive area for an upscale, daily-fee operation.

"The few public courses that have been built are older and they are munis," he said.

Continued on page 54

Husband's Heritage Golf makes 1st buy

SAN DIEGO — Heritage Golf Group, a San Diego-based course ownership and operating company, has acquired Polo Golf & Country Club in northern Atlanta.

This purchase by Heritage from Fairgreen Capital, L.P. marks the initial course acquisition by the company. Heritage is led by Bob Husband, former founder, president and chief executive officer of Cobblestone Golf Group. Husband and Heritage's management team created the recently sold Cobblestone Golf Group.

"This marks the first in a collection of golf properties we plan to acquire throughout the United States," said Husband, who joined GTCR Golder Rauner, LLC, a Chicago-based private equity firm. "We will invest further capital to make significant improvements to the facility including the golf course, clubhouse and various other member areas."

Polo Golf & Country Club is an 18-hole private country club, built in 1989 and designed by Joe Lee. The course is a 6,558-yard layout featuring bentgrass greens.



ACQUISITIONS

eGolfevents unveils new 'Best of Business Golf' online program

By PETER BLAIS

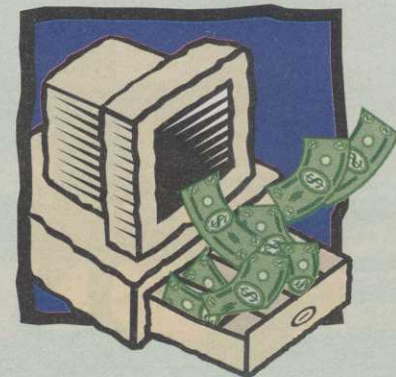
LEESBURG, Va. — eGolfevents, a web-based company that markets more than 7,000 courses to golf-event planners, has formed a Best of Business Golf (BOBG) program that provides courses a preferred listing to help them attract more golf outings.

The eGolfevents.com website is focused solely on helping golf-event planners find courses interested in hosting golf outings. Developers plan to eventually list all U.S. golf courses that host outings in the database.

For \$500, courses can choose the BOBG designation, which provides far more information than simply whether or not a course welcomes outings.

BOBG course listings include more than 120 categories of information about the facility. BOBG listings include detailed information about the course location, golf course playability, food and beverage capabilities, meeting space, tournament scoring, nearby accommodations, and non-golfer/after-hours activities. Since a BOBG course provides more information, eGolfevent developers believe those courses are far more likely to be selected by event planners.

The BOBG designation also allows the event planner to communicate directly with the course by e-mail or fax. Event planners list their outing needs on the eGolfevents.com website, then send them to the course by highlighting the



Continued on page 54

eGolfevents.com

Continued from page 49

"Submit" button on the website.

"Golf-event planners, at the click of a few buttons or with the help of our customer service staff, narrow down the massive list of potential golf course hosts based upon their requirements to conduct a successful golf event," said Chief Marketing Officer Strick Heilman. "Meanwhile, golf courses use eGolfevents and our website as a qualified marketing tool to generate outing sales leads."

eGolf events is used by golf-event plan-

ners scheduling events with groups of 20 or more people. Charities, trade associations, small-to mid-size businesses and large corporations have used eGolfevent to schedule outings since the site's inception last year.

"They [golf-event planners] have a difficult time finding the right place to play," Heilman explained. "There are no directories. Everything out there now is based on a single golfer's walk-in-the-park experience. It doesn't matter if you are a *Golf Digest* Top 100 course. If the course characteristics and amenities don't match your group's needs, you won't have a successful event.

"On the other side, golf courses have a tremendously difficult time finding and attracting outings. The number of outings per year can dramatically affect a course maintenance budget. And private clubs are finding that the occasional outing can help augment member dues.

eGolfevents offers ancillary services for the event planner such as providing merchandise for golf outings, helping find hole-in-one or rain-date insurance, providing on-line registration and/or marketing for the event itself, performing customized searches for potential outing sites, and/or actually managing the outing.

Of the 7,000 courses in its database, 275 are BOBG facilities. "We are constantly adding to that number," Heilman said.

Among the courses that are scheduling outings with event planners via eGolfevents.com are Kiawah Island (S.C.) Resort, Doral Resort in Miami, and Mission Hills Golf Club in Rancho Mirage, Calif.

While some high-profile private clubs have expressed interest in opening their facilities to outings via eGolfevents to help offset membership dues, the upscale daily-fee facilities have been the most receptive to the concept, Heilman said.

eGolfevents clients include American Express, Philip Morris, Isuzu, GTE, Panasonic, Abbott Laboratories, and KPMG Peat Marwick. Smaller groups — such as the Shrewsbury (N.J.) Police Benevolent Association, which used eGolfevents to locate courses in its own area for last summer's outing — have also used the service.

"The difference between us and the other dot-com's in the golf business is that we don't require the courses to make an investment in hardware, software, management systems or management programs," Heilman said. "We do not do tee times. It's purely a lead-generating tool. It's like an old-fashioned co-op. We take \$500 from each course and turn that into a good-sized marketing budget. We market golf outings as a whole. When event planners search the website by region, there they [courses] are."

Heilman, who has a sports marketing background, launched the company a year ago with President David Price, a long-time consultant with top accounting firms. Brad Bogle of Houston and Roger DuMez of Chicago are also partners. ▶

Empire Golf

Continued from page 49

Perhaps the most intriguing course among the Empire network is Pine Hill. Located less than a mile from Pine Valley Golf Club (annually voted the top course in the world by most golf publications), Pine Hill is being designed by Tom Fazio over terrain similar to that of its famous neighbor.

In addition to Bergstol, Empire Golf's management staff includes Regional Manager John Napier, Chief Financial Officer Mark Unger and Vice President/Operations Bruce Barker. Unger will oversee all financial operations. Baker, who has more than 30 years of golf industry experience, will be responsible for club operations.

The superintendents at each course are responsible for their own operations, Bergstol said. Dr. Richard Hurley has done some agronomic consulting for Empire, he added.

Bergstol has no specific numerical goals as to how big the company might grow. "My goal is to do them one at a time and do them well," he said. "I don't want to get over my head, which a lot of guys do. I'm not looking to do a REIT (real-estate investment trust) or anything like that. You lose control that way. I want to build them up and operate them well... In two years we should have about 10 courses.

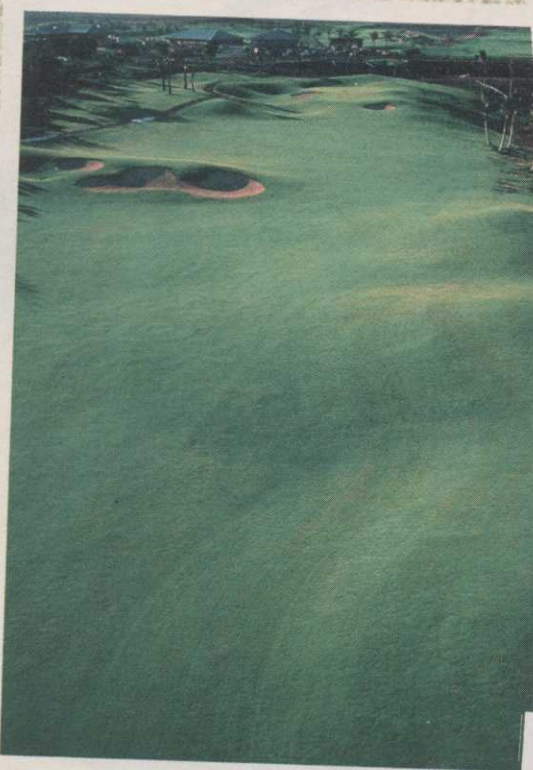
"We'll do acquisitions," Bergstol added. "But we are a construction company, also. So, if we can design, develop, construct and manage courses, we have a major advantage because we can produce a better product cheaper. That's my little niche. I want to get very strong in this market." ▶

Picture this . . .



salam

Seashore Paspalum™




Now, you have a fine-textured warm-season turf variety for...

- High Salinity Soils
- High Salinity or Effluent/Recycled Irrigation Water
- Good Drought Tolerance
- Wide pH Range
- Greens, Fairway, Rough and Tee Mowing Heights
- Lower Fertility Requirements
- Reduced Needs for Pesticides
- Lower Light Intensity Microsites
- True-To-Type and Vegetatively Propagated
- High-Gloss for Easy 'Striping' with Lightweight Mowers
- Rapid Grow-In and Recouperation from Traffic and Divots



Photos by Robin Nelson

Find out more about  salam™

Offered Exclusively By:

Southern Turf Nurseries

US toll free 800-841-6413

Int'l direct 912-382-5655

Fax 912-382-5301

www.southernturf.com



southern turf nurseries

Quality and Service... Beyond Your Expectations

Highway 82 East • P.O. Box 230 • Brookfield, GA 31727 • USA