



## BRIEFS

### GOLF PARTNERS WORLDWIDE OPEN FOR BUSINESS

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Golf Partners Worldwide LLC is open for business. The company, based here, will seek business opportunities throughout the world. Members Marv French, Ed Gowan, Gary Grigg, John Miller and Steve Zavodnick have extensive backgrounds in the game of golf ranging from ownership, management, construction and development, agronomy and legal expertise. The five members have been involved golf projects such as Pumpkin Ridge outside of Portland, Ore., The Boulders Resort in Scottsdale, Shadow Glen Golf Club near Kansas City and Royal Poinciana in Naples, Fla.

### WESTERN GOLF PROP. NAMES EDGMON

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Western Golf Properties, Inc. has announced the appointment of Hugh Edgmon to president and CEO of the company. Edgmon replaces Joe Black who has moved into a director position on the company's board. Edgmon has been associated with Western Golf Properties for over five years, beginning as general manager at Serrano Country Club, and most recently as vice president of western regional operations, where he oversaw the management of five golf properties. In his new role, Mr. Edgmon will personally oversee the management and operations for all Western Golf Properties.

### INTRAWEST APPOINTS THOMPSON

PHOENIX, Ariz. — Intrawest Golf has appointed of Kyle A. Thompson director of retail sales. He will be responsible for establishing a business plan and directing the functions of the retail division by spearheading the retail initiative at the corporate and facility level. Thompson comes to Intrawest from Sears, Roebuck and Co., where he was a merchandise planner.

### BRIERWOOD HIRES HOPKINS

HAMBURG, N.Y. — Brierwood Country Club has hired Richard S. Hopkins, Jr. as the new membership services manager here at this private, Arnold Palmer Golf Management-owned club in suburban Buffalo. Hopkins will be responsible for the sales of new golf and social memberships at Brierwood while also providing account services for the club's current membership. A native of Niagara Falls, N.Y., Hopkins was most recently an account executive with the NHL's Buffalo Sabres.

## Del Webb to add more new courses to REIT

By ANDREW OVERBECK

PHOENIX, Ariz. — After more than four decades of developing "active adult" communities and building golf courses, Del Webb Corp. has taken a new direction with its golf operations. While the company manages the 16 courses that it has built over the years, it has also established a real estate investment trust (REIT) as an entity to hold some of its golf course assets.

"The company builds terrific golf assets and then gives them away to home owners," said Henry DeLozier, vice president of golf operations. "Two years ago, Del Webb determined to make a transition from giving away courses to transferring ownership into a closely held REIT and turning golf operations into a profit center."

Of Del Webb's 16 courses, six are under the REIT and 10 are dedicated to the homeowners' associations. The courses in the REIT have all opened in the last two years. However, in the next three to four years, Del Webb will be adding 14 more courses to its existing communities.

"Of the 14 new courses, eight will be under the REIT, four are promised to homeowners and two are still up in the



Sun City Huntley, in Huntley, Ill. is Del Webb's first development outside the Sun Belt

air," said DeLozier.

### EXPLOITING A NICHE MARKET

Del Webb, which did \$2 billion in sales last year alone, is experiencing continuing growth for two reasons according to DeLozier. "One, we are selling a lot of homes. Two, we are in a lot of really strong markets," he said.

While over development and lack of new players is leading to over supply in some parts of the country, Del Webb has remained somewhat insulated from the challenges facing both developers and existing courses.

"We are unique to the golf industry be-

cause we have the competitive advantage of full golf courses," said DeLozier. "Our residents can play on any day of the week, whereas many courses in overbuilt markets struggle because they cannot fill off-peak capacity. We have a good demographic. Our golfers are ready to play — not only do they have more discretionary income, they also have more discretionary time."

Even though 20 to 25 percent of Del Webb residents are golfers, anywhere from 20 to 50 percent of golfers are visitors, said DeLozier. New rates have been introduced to entice visitors, while still preserving

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Elkhorn Golf Club

## Doral Golf to manage Elkhorn GC in Idaho's Pioneer Range

SUN VALLEY, Idaho — MeriStar Hotels & Resorts announced that its Doral Golf Division has signed an agreement with an affiliate of New York-based Blackacre Capital Group, LLC, to manage the upscale Elkhorn Golf Club here in Sun Valley. Blackacre Capital is a privately held fund with investments in golf, hotels and other commercial properties.

"This is the second we'll manage for Blackacre," said Paul W. Whetsell, MeriStar chairman and CEO. "Our plan is to continue to build on existing relationships with individual owners and institutional investors like Blackacre, as well as seek new ones. We intend to add to our current management portfolio of 12 upscale and luxury golf courses throughout North America at a deliberate pace."

Designed by Robert Trent Jones and Robert Trent Jones Jr., Elkhorn Golf Club is a semi-private, 7,100-plus-yard, 18-hole championship course with a driving range and putting green. Blackacre recently completed construction of a 7,500-square-foot club house, which includes a 50-seat grille, pro shop and locker rooms.

The Elkhorn Golf Club is part of The Elkhorn Resort, a comprehensive resort village located in Sun Valley, which includes a resort hotel, shops, restaurants, condominiums, and single family homes.

## The Orchards GC unveils clubhouse, membership deal

By HAL PHILLIPS

SOUTH HADLEY, Mass. — The elegant Donald Ross design here at The Orchards Golf Club can now boast a clubhouse of comparable quality, following a renovation and upgrade directed by Arnold Palmer Golf Management. The unveiling took place Aug. 1.

The Orchards GC was the brainchild of one Joseph Skinner, who commissioned Ross to design the course for his daughter in the 1920s. In 1941, Skinner donated the 18-hole course to Mount Holyoke College, which still owns the club. Palmer manages the facility on the school's behalf.

"The clubhouse is an old carriage house which was moved from the Skinner property to the course in the early 1940s," said Orchards general manger Glenn Zito. The

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## ClubLink sells Piedmont GC to ClubCorp for \$9.5 million

KING CITY, ONTARIO — ClubLink Corp. has sold Piedmont Golf Club in Haymarket, Va. to ClubCorp, Inc. for net proceeds of \$9.5 million. ClubCorp, based in Dallas, currently owns 26 percent of ClubLink's common shares.

ClubLink acquired Piedmont Golf Club in March from developer GolfSouth Holdings LLC as part of an option agreement held by ClubLink U.S. Corp., a wholly owned subsidiary of ClubLink. Piedmont Golf Club, which is located near Washington, D.C., is a private golf course under construction.

"Because of ClubCorp's already strong presence in the Washington, D.C., market and their substantial ownership position in ClubLink, it made sense for ClubCorp to own and operate Piedmont Golf Club," said Bruce Simmonds, ClubLink president and chief executive officer.

In addition to the \$9.5-million payoff, ClubLink has received a perpetual 20-percent profit and liquidation participation, payable from cash flow generated by Piedmont after a fixed return on ClubCorp's invested capital and its repayment.

## The Orchards

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clubhouse is a fitting complement to the course, which is perhaps one of the best-preserved examples of Ross' architectural genius, Zito added. In fact, Massachusetts Golf Association (MGA) members recently recognized The Orchards GC as the state's pre-eminent "hidden gem" and will hold the 2001 State Amateur here.

## Del Webb

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affordable rates for residents.

While the growth in the number of golfers has been stagnant, DeLozier is more concerned with other economic indicators, directing his attention instead to the housing market.

"People who buy homes from us are in most cases selling a place before they move," he said. "So it is the person who qualifies to buy their old place that we are the most concerned about."

### ZOOMERS

As the market for its resort-style communities has grown, more active baby boomers are now becoming residents, thus changing Del Webb's course design strategy.

"We call them 'zoomers'," said DeLozier. "These are people who expect high quality golf. So we are giving them courses that are longer and more challenging."

For instance, at Sun City Hilton Head, the first course, Okatie Creek, was built in the traditional Del Webb model of resort golf—a nice and easy course that is relatively flat and has few obstacles. "On the second course, Hidden Cypress, we asked Mark McCumber [the designer] to turn up the heat a little bit," said DeLozier. "The course is 7,100 yards and is all the challenge you can want." That course opened in May.

### GOING FORWARD

While Del Webb will be adding courses to its existing communities over the next three to four years, the company is also looking at other markets. Currently, there are no details on where these developments may be built, but Del Webb's most recent venture in Illinois may be an indication of future plans.

In June, the first Sun City community outside of the Sun Belt opened in Huntley, Ill. Sun City Huntley includes Whisper Creek Golf Course, which was designed by Greg Nash and Billy Casper.

"Many of our buyers in the Sun Belt come to us from the Midwest," said DeLozier. "Our polling told us that there is an audience that will always consider themselves Chicagoans and they don't want to get too far away from family and business activities." ■

Starting this year, full-access memberships have been offered on two levels: "regional", for golfers who live within a 40- to 75-mile radius of the club (\$1,250 initiation, \$1,500 in annual dues); and "national", for those who live outside the 75-mile zone (\$750 initiation, \$1,000 in annual dues). The membership program at The Orchards is unique to New England, "but it's commonplace in resort areas, and in Britain,

where many prestigious clubs offer 'international' memberships," Zito explained. "The response to this membership policy has been enthusiastic."

The location of The Orchards makes this membership approach feasible. Located just off Interstate 91, South Hadley is accessible to metropolitan New York, Hartford, Providence and Boston. Palmer has already welcomed new members from 15 states. ■



The newly renovated clubhouse at The Orchards GC

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