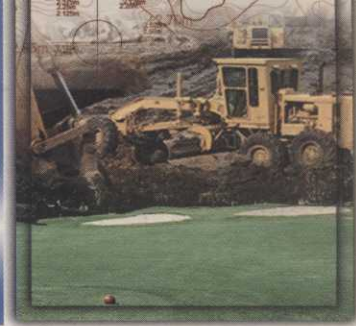


DEVELOPMENT & RENOVATION



BRIEFS

WEITZ COMPLETES ROSE CREEK CONSTRUCTION

NORTH PALM BEACH, Fla. — Weitz Golf International has completed construction of Rose Creek Golf Course in Edmond, Okla. The Arthur Hills-designed course, which also features a large practice and teaching facility, will open for play in early summer 2003. Rose Creek is being developed by The Melrose Co., based in Hilton Head, S.C.

JACOBSON FINISHES PHASE I OF INDIAN LAKES RENOVATION

LIBERTYVILLE, Ill. — Golf course architect Rick Jacobson has completed the first phase of a \$5 million 36-hole renovation at Indian Lakes Resort in suburban Bloomington. He also broke ground in early October on Phase II of the project, which will turn the 1960s-era resort into an upscale, state-of-the-art golf complex. Phase I involved a complete makeover of the front nine of the resort's West Course.

WEISKOPF RESTORES GREENS AT TROON NORTH MONUMENT

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Renovation at the Monument Course at Troon Golf's Troon North Golf Club has been completed. Tom Weiskopf, who originally designed the course with Jay Morrish, restored the greens to their original specifications over the summer. The most major change Weiskopf oversaw was widening of the long, narrow green on the 14th hole to provide additional pin placements behind the front green side bunker.

OU COURSE RENOVATION NEARLY COMPLETE

ATHENS, Ohio — Architect Barry Serafin's transformation of the Ohio University Golf Course has been mostly completed, with greens and tees growing in and fairways being seeded. The course has been closed this year to allow the builder, Quality Golf of Sunbury, to construct the final phase of Serafin's plans. University officials hope to reopen the course in June 2003.

2002 NEWSMAKERS

Downing's Willoughby GC reborn after renovation

Editor's note: This is the final installment in a series of articles on the renovation at Willoughby Golf Club by superintendent Kevin Downing. After six months of work, the club reopened on Nov. 1.

By KEVIN DOWNING, CGCS

STUART, Fla. — Sitting in the men's locker room on opening day can really provide you with direct feedback on the successes or failures of a project. After having the membership removed from their home club for six months, there are anxious moments while listening to folks comment about their first impression of their new and improved course. Let me share with

you some of the comments that we have received and some that any golf course superintendent can expect to hear after a reconstruction or renovation.

EXPECTATIONS

As I explained in a previous article, we believed most of the comments or opinions would likely be about things that the golfers could actually see or experience. It is only reasonable that most people would render an opinion about an improvement or modification rather than comment about improved drainage or better turf texture. The first four or five groups in the clubhouse commented about the usual things such as green speeds, bunker consistency and tee leveling, which were

major objectives of the overall project. As expected, nobody commented about the new underground tubing, the fairway drainage or the new zeolite-to-sand ratio

in the greens mix. The moral of the story is to make sure you spend adequate time and energy to make visual enhancements to the course.

Our design modifications were

Continued on page 13



The ninth fairway at the recently reopened Willoughby Golf Club in Stuart, Fla.

2002 NEWSMAKERS

PGA Village to proceed — maybe

By DEREK RICE

SAN ANTONIO — The cyclical saga of the proposed PGA Village here continued through late October, with the San Antonio City Council unanimously approving a new agreement with Austin-based Lumbermen's Investment Corp. to build the golf resort on environmentally sensitive land above the city's aquifer recharge zone.

The resort would include as many as three courses, a golf education center, two luxury hotels and several thousand residential units, all built on 2,861 acres.

Earlier this year, opponents of the plan collected enough signatures to force a referendum on the issue, which led the PGA to withdraw from the project.

The groups' opposition to the plan is based on two factors. Because of the location of the site, there is concern that chemicals from the golf course could find their way into the city's drinking water. While that is a major concern, Enrique Valdivia of the Smart Growth Coalition, one of the groups that opposed the project, told *Golf Course News* in June that the major opposition stems from

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2002 NEWSMAKERS

Builders weather low construction demand

By DEREK RICE

LINCOLN, Neb. — Golf 20/20's first annual report, released earlier this year (GCN, Sept. 2002), projected that there would be 285

course openings, one of the smallest numbers in years. If that number holds true, this will be the third

consecutive year that openings have declined, which doesn't paint a rosy picture for the construction industry.

Lee Hetrick, executive director of the Golf Course Builders Association of America, said while the market has slowed down, the accredited builders in the association are finding work.

"All my guys are busy right now," he said. "Construction isn't at the volume where it used to be, but if you've established your credentials to where people know who you are and that you can bring a project in under budget, then I think you're OK."

One of the challenges, Hetrick said, is the ability to bid competitively without losing money.

"The bidding is very competitive," he said. "It's a whole new world out there for some of these guys."

Hetrick said renovation work is helping to keep some in the industry busy as they try to

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HIGH-PROFILE RENOVATION



Architect Tom Fazio points out some of the changes at Augusta National to Jim Nantz and Ken Venturi of CBS Sports prior to this year's Masters.

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Without a doubt, the most talked-about renovation of 2002 was the lengthening of Augusta National. The public got to see the result of Tom Fazio's much-anticipated renovation during the 2002 Masters in April.

But last year's renovation isn't the end of it, according to published reports, Fazio is working on lengthening the fifth hole, known as "Magnolia," a 435-yard uphill dogleg-left, in time for the 2003 tournament. According to the *Augusta Chronicle*, the tee has been moved back 15 yards while the fairway bunkers have been moved forward 80 to 90 yards. The entire fairway will also be shifted right to create a more daunting dogleg.

Neither Fazio or Augusta National chairman Hootie Johnson have spoken about the changes, but Johnson said in April that "we are going to address the weakness of the fifth hole."

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DEVELOPMENT & RENOVATION

Construction in 2002

Continued from page 11

weather the slowdown in not only construction, but in business in general.

"About five years ago when people started looking at the new starts and it started to wane, I think the smart guys went out and started to retool their marketing efforts toward renovations and helping superintendents and looking at the small projects that typically five years before that they wouldn't have even considered because there was such a demand for them to do full-scale golf courses," he said.

Both now and in coming months, Hetrick said builders face difficulty in finding af-

'Everybody is entitled to make a profit ... it really hurts the industry when it gets so competitive that people start buying jobs.'

— Lee Hetrick

fordable insurance and bonding for projects. He said the problem could get worse before it gets any better.

"If there's one issue that we have that's most difficult for builders to face today it's the bonding issue and insuring the project," he said. "That's the one that's going to be the biggest hurdle to get through. It's been described to me that we still haven't seen the bottom of the barrel in the bonding market from 9/11. You have to figure out how you can go out there and maintain a level of expertise and not have everything crater in on you."

What makes construction a particularly tenuous industry is dependence its on profits "trickling down" from developers to builders, Hetrick said.

"Everybody is entitled to make a profit," he said. "It really hurts the industry when it gets so competitive that people start buying jobs."

"Some jobs you have to let go by," he added. "The balance is extremely keen right now."

While it is difficult at the moment, Hetrick said the golf industry as a whole should begin to see an upturn in the near future.

"There are projects out there and they're finding funding. Everybody seems to be getting the work and maintaining some level of security for their employees," he said. "We all seem to be busy. Everybody seems to be getting the work and maintaining some level of security for their employees, so we're cautiously optimistic." ■

We want to hear from you!

Letters to the editor are an integral part of GCN, so let your voice be heard. Send all correspondence to:

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