

Puddicombe tackling ownership role

By DEREK RICE

EDMONTON, Alberta, Canada — Golf course design firm Sid Puddicombe Associates plans to take the next step and become a golf course owner and operator with the opening of RedTail Landing Golf Club, which is scheduled for spring 2003.

"This is their flagship course," said Kimberly Schick-Puddicombe, director of sales and marketing for RedTail Landing. "The guys over there have always worked everywhere else but at home, done it for everybody else, and sometimes there are guidelines and restrictions that a particular owner

wants, so they just wanted to go to town on their own thing."

Construction has been completed on the 234-acre site located at the entrance to the Edmonton International Airport's AirLinks Business Park,

Continued on next page



The 16th hole at RedTail Landing, prior to seeding that will take place as soon as the snow melts.

Twin Creeks

Continued from page 15

the homeowner's standpoint it's nice because they're up a little higher and they get the long Texas hill country views as well



The planned clubhouse at Twin Creeks.

as expansive views of the golf holes themselves. They don't just get a confined view of a golf hole like you might think of in Phoenix or Scottsdale or Palm Springs."

Austin's mild winter has also contributed to the success of the construction, Turner said.

"We were pretty fortunate with the winter weather," he said.

Turner said he hopes to have a superintendent and general manager hired by the beginning of summer to oversee the final stages of the project.

In addition to the golf course and surrounding community, Twin Creeks will feature a recreation center, two tennis courts and a water park. ■

BREC course

Continued from page 15

ginning," he said.

There were also wetlands issues at the site, Palmer said, which Craig Schreiner Golf Course Architects incorporated into the master plan.

"Craig Schreiner has worked very well with the site to minimize the impact on those wetland areas," he said. "We mitigated 14 acres out there. The adjacent wetlands are some of the features that make the golf course so unique and make it such a beautiful course."

Among those issues was the relocation of a six-foot alligator to a neighboring swamp.

"It calls [the wetlands] home, so we'll see if it comes back," said Kristi Barnett, director of BREC's public relations.

BREC is also undergoing a renovation at its Clark Park facility thanks to a grant from The First Tee. Both projects have been planned and overseen by Schreiner.

"We already have extensive junior golf program, we're just looking to make it better through The First Tee," Palmer said. "Clark Park is a beautiful nine-hole course. We're going to change it a little bit, and add a driving range, make it more friendly for our purposes." ■

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Designer tackles ownership

Continued from previous page

and at press time, the firm was waiting for the snow to melt so seeding could begin, Schick-Puddicombe said.

"We have way too much snow at the moment, so we need to get rid of the snow and then we'll be doing the grow-in this summer," she said. "We're

not sodding. Everything will be planted by seed. We'll just be growing it in and cleaning it up, putting cart paths in and some of the final details."

Depending on how the grow-in progresses, Schick-Puddicombe said, the course might open for limited play later this year. As far as staffing is

concerned, the club has hired a superintendent, but could not divulge his name because he hadn't yet given notice at his prior job.

"We're excited to have him on board," Schick-Puddicombe said. "He'll bring a lot of knowledge and experience and energy into the project."

The plan is to hire a general manager sometime this summer,

but that plan could be accelerated if there is to be play on the course this year.

"It really depends on what happens this year because if we do have a little bit of limited play this year, we'll obviously have to hire some people on just to get that going," Schick-Puddicombe said.

RedTail's clubhouse is scheduled to break ground this month. ■

Golf Trail

Continued from page 15

to the trail as well. The most land-efficient layout for the site is a circle within a square, but Pate said that design isn't absolute.

"Depending on the terrain, it could be linear or it could take on different shapes. It's easy to do on a flat site," he said "It will fit into all kinds of equations, whether it's a business park or residential development or a freestanding one on unused public land."

While no facility has been built yet, Pate said he has some sites that are close.

"The one that seems like it might go first is located in SeaTac, which is the big airport area for Seattle," he said. "There's a half of a park that hasn't been developed that was granted to the city of SeaTac by the FAA. It's a neat place, about 6,000 hotel rooms within a mile. I like that site a lot, and we're grinding through, working with the FAA and the port of Seattle."

Pate said Economic Research Associates did an economic study for his firm in Seattle and found that Golf Trail is much more efficient than a typical nine-hole course.

"They showed that the nine-hole course could make about \$1 million (net operating income on an annual basis) running at about 80 percent capacity. Then they showed how the Golf Trail would make \$1 million operating at 20 percent capacity," he said.

Pate also pointed to Sportometrics research that suggests that alternative facilities and traditional courses can peacefully coexist.

"These alternative facilities or whatever they are seem to thrive in and around other golf courses and they don't cannibalize each other, which would suggest that alternative facilities is a growth sector for the golf industry," he said. "It's becoming more and more apparent that the golf courses are overbuilt, particularly these high-end daily fees. There's going to be a lot of blood spilled in the next year or two."

Pate said he looks forward to identifying and building the first of his designs, whether that is in SeaTac or somewhere else. He's also cautious, knowing that previous plans, such as a course conversion in Honolulu, have encountered problems.

"I'm principally looking for locations now," he said. "The first one is going to be critical, so I need to identify that. I might get stymied at any site." ■



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