

DEVELOPMENT & RENOVATION



Coldwater developers bring affordable public golf to Iowa

By DEREK RICE

AMES, Iowa — At this time next year, golfers will be playing Coldwater Golf Links, which is nestled between the athletic fields at Iowa State University and the business district of Ames on 150 acres of former farmland and land leased from the university.

Routing and construction of the Tripp Davis-designed links course has been completed and seeding is underway. Despite a string of bad-weather days in mid-September, the developers said the course opening would be on time next year.

Niebur Golf Construction Services took on the building and shaping of the course, which required moving 450,000 cubic yards of dirt to give the flat farmland some definition.

For developers Marvin J. Walter and Scott Randall of the Randall Corp., the experience of building a golf course was a new one. The two owned ad-

joining tracts of land on the site and decided to pool their resources to form Legacy Golf Associates Inc. In order to build an 18-hole course, they leased 50 acres from Iowa State. That land sits adjacent to the football overflow parking area in the shadow of Jack Trice Stadium, where Iowa State plays its home games. Under the agreement with the university, should a larger stadium be built, which would require more parking, the university may park cars on



A view of what will be the 16th hole at Coldwater Golf Links in Ames, Iowa.

Photo: Derek Rice

the golf course. But Matt Randall, vice president of the Randall Corp. said he's not worried about that.

"The stadium they have now doesn't fill up for most games," he said. "But if it happens, I'll be out here parking cars and taking money."

The search for an architect who

Continued on page 12

BRIEFS

RIVER HILLS REOPENS AFTER RECONSTRUCTION

LITTLE RIVER, S.C. — River Hills Golf & Country Club has reopened after a \$2 million reconstruction project. The greens, which were originally bentgrass, were replaced with Champion bermudagrass. Other improvements to the Tom Jackson-designed course included redesigning several holes and making aesthetic changes, such as adding stone bulkheads around several of the course's water features, changing some of the bunkering, landscaping with indigenous vegetation and replacing all the bridges.

TURNER CONSTRUCTION TO OPEN NEW BRANCH

GAITHERSBURG, Md. — T.A. Turner Construction will open a branch office in Orlando, Fla., to serve the Southeastern region. Michael Crone, who comes to Turner from ValleyCrest Golf Maintenance (formerly Environmental Golf Inc.), will serve as vice president in charge of Turner's operations at the new office, including two fully staffed and equipped divisions specializing in golf course construction and renovation, as well as environmental construction and renovation. Crone has worked on more than 60 golf course construction and renovation projects in his more than 30 years in the industry.

FIRST NATIONAL COMMITS TO GOLF PROJECTS

MARTINSVILLE, N.J. — First National of America Inc. continues to fund golf projects across the country. In September, First National committed more than \$10 million in funds for two projects, Taqueta Falls Country Club in Rising Fawn, Ga., and Lakecliff in Spicewood, Texas. Taqueta Falls was designed by Rick Robins and will be managed by Troon Golf, while Arnold Palmer designed the Lakecliff project. Earlier this year, First National completed funding for Black Mesa Golf Course in Santa Fe, N.M. At press time, the company said it planned to commit to a course expansion project in northern California, an acquisition in Ohio and the refurbishment of a course in New York.

Niebur keeping busy despite building slowdown

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — While work continues on Coldwater Golf Links in Ames, Iowa (see story above), golf course builder Niebur Golf has several other ongoing projects proceeding coast to coast in spite of a slowdown in course construction.

"The housing market has

been keeping us alive," said president Joe Niebur. "All but eight of our 10 projects are in housing developments."

Current projects include:

- Trilogy at Redmond Ridge for Shea Homes in Redmond, Wash. Work on the Gary Panks-designed 18-hole course will be completed this year.
- An 18-hole course designed by

Rick Phelps in Falcon, Colo. It is due to open in fall 2003.

- Highland Meadows GC in Windsor, Colo. Work just started on the 18-hole course designed by Art Schaupter.

- Art Hills' White Clay Creek GC in Wilmington, Del. The course will be finished this fall.

- 18-hole addition by Robert

Continued on page 13

East West Partners breaks ground in Truckee

By DOUG SAUNDERS

TRUCKEE, Calif. — Site preparation began last month on a new Jack Nicklaus Signature golf course in this small railroad town in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Old Greenwood Golf Course marks the beginning of a new era for this hamlet that for years has been the gateway to nearby Lake Tahoe.

Old Greenwood is the first of two courses to be built as the linchpin to an ambitious resort undertaken by East West Partners, which will feature 3,000 home sites, the creation of a European-style ski village at nearby Northstar at Tahoe and complete recreational amenities for prospective club members.

The project will signal a transformation for the small mountain community and also mark an expansion of the resort concept that

East West developed over two decades in Colorado. East West is internationally recognized for the development around the base of



Construction has begun on East West Partners' Old Greenwood Golf Course in Truckee, Calif.

Photo: Freddy Bird

Beaver Creek, Colo. That complex combined a ski village core with a blend of single-family homesites, shared ownership homes and condominiums for visitors. The ski resort brought winter visitors, and a Robert Trent Jones Jr. course was

constructed to lure summer residents and visitors.

"We have begun to remove trees and will do as much rough work on the first five holes this fall as the weather permits. We should be able to complete final shaping and sod the course by next fall in order to open in 2004," said Todd Patrick, East West Partners' director of sales.

The development group has teamed with Crescent Real Estate as a financial backer for the 15-year project. East West Partners is also already involved in a long-term lease arrangement with another Truckee course, Coyote Moon. With the construction of the two new courses, East West will be able to offer 54 holes of golf to prospective members of the planned Tahoe

Continued on page 13

Univ. of Texas, developer in golf course pact

AUSTIN, Texas — Taylor Woodrow Communities and the University of Texas have partnered to bring a golf course and real estate project to Austin.

Construction is underway at the University of Texas Golf Club at Steiner Ranch, a club that will serve university alumni, Steiner Ranch residents and the city of Austin. Dallas businessman Mike Myers, a longtime supporter of academic and athletic programs at the University of Texas, is spearheading the project. November 2003 is the target date for the course opening.

Bechtol Russell Golf Inc. designed the 7,008-yard, par-71 course, and plans to seek additional input from several former University of Texas golfers.

Taylor Woodrow, which is a limited partner in the project, along with Lincoln Property Co. and Steiner Ranch Ltd., has developed country club living components around the world, including The Legacy Club at Alauqua Lakes in Orlando, Fla., and Mirasol in Palm Gardens, Fla., home of the PGA Tour's Honda Classic.

Upon completion of the course, Taylor Woodrow will assume management of the course and will develop the land surrounding it.

Desert Challenge

Continued from page 3

MacCurrach's attorney, Sarah McHugh, refutes these allegations, and a common pleas court has ruled

problem with MacCurrach, by God he would have moved beyond us by now. He hasn't paid us and he still can't make it work."

As for Sparagowski, he said he and a partner are close to putting a deal



Construction equipment sits idle at the site of the planned Desert Challenge.

for MacCurrach in the case. Sparagowski's attorneys appealed to the appellate court, which upheld the lower court's decision. They are now appealing to the Ohio Supreme Court. McHugh expects the Supreme Court to reject the appeal and for the case to eventually go to trial.

After MacCurrach left the job, Sparagowski brought in local construction firm Bihn Excavating, but work stopped when the money ran out. The course is mostly rough shaped and nine holes are largely completed, though the turf has died on the holes that were grassed before the construction stopped.

"If he had the [financial] wherewithal, he would have completed that golf course by now," said MacCurrach. "If he really had a

together to fund the first phase of 31 housing lots on the property. "That deal would generate half a million dollars, and that is all we need to finish nine holes. With that money in place we would be 60 days from having nine holes open." ■

MacCurrach

Continued from page 3

"Financing has become more difficult with the stronghold institutions stepping down," he said. "The lenders that have followed are charging a lot more for their money because these are high-risk deals. Developers have to be prepared because obstacles now stop projects."

To avoid these risks,

Coldwater

Continued from page 11

could transform their land into an inviting golf course led them to Davis, who is based in Dallas.

"We thought we really needed to bring in a name architect. We chose Tripp Davis because of his background on projects like The Tribute," Walter said. "He was also very helpful in the search for a contractor."

The main reason Walters and Randall decided to build a golf course was to help fill the need for affordable public golf in the Ames area. According to Walter, there are some nine-hole courses that farmers have built on their land, but very few truly public 18-hole courses nearby.

"We haven't decided on a definite price range yet, but it will be competitive with the other courses in the area," Walter said. "We want this course to be competitive with higher-end golf courses with a country club feel but at a daily-fee price."

Brian Maloy, Coldwater's superintendent, said it is commendable that developers would think of affordable public golf when building a course, rather than building an

upscale private club.

"Affordable golf that is available to the public is important to the success of the game," he said.

In order to build the course, a floodway needed to be moved, which required permits from the state Department of Natural Resources. Walter said the goal all along has been to keep the course in tune with the surrounding environment.

"We have made use of the considerable wetlands on the property," Walter said. "Coldwater will blend into the environment."

When it came time to hire a superintendent, the owners had to look no farther than Ames native and Iowa State graduate Maloy, who had been working as an agronomist for the USGA Green Section for the past several years. Maloy

said he wanted to return home to Ames someday, so he was thrilled at the Coldwater opportunity.

"I met Matt (Randall) at a trade



Construction continues on the clubhouse at Coldwater Golf Links.

show and he said he was looking for a superintendent for a course he was building in Ames," Maloy said. "I thought, 'This is perfect,' so I jumped at the chance."

To complete the decision-making team, Coldwater will look to hire a business manager sometime in the near future.

"We're probably looking at around the first of the year," Randall said. "We don't want to be making too many decisions until the team is in place."

Under Maloy's employment agreement, some of his salary is based on the course achieving certain performance levels. While this could mean lower than average pay at times, Maloy said he relishes the opportunity to work under that structure.

"I am all for this kind of agreement," Maloy said. "I think more superintendents ought to work like this."

Another main draw for Maloy to return home was the opportunity to work closely with Iowa State again. Through the relationship with the university, Maloy will have access to a steady stream of employees through the university's turfgrass research department.

"We've got students working for us part-time, and it's really a win-win situation," Maloy said. "I can hire five or six turf students for less than it would cost to hire full-time staff, and they're getting the hands-on experience they're going to need in the future."

Partly because of this arrangement, the course owners were able to get John Deere to give them a discount on equipment.

"John Deere was smart about this," Maloy said. "They want these kids to be using their equipment so that when they're working on their own courses, they'll be familiar with the company."

Walter agreed, adding, "John Deere really stepped up and we worked together to develop a unique program with them."

The course design includes an alternate fairway, where Iowa State students and professors will conduct turf research, Maloy said.

"It will serve as a lab of sorts where they can get a hands-on feel for turf management," Maloy said. ■

in a tightening market is to do less work. New work has to be regional or have a good relationship behind it or we won't do it."

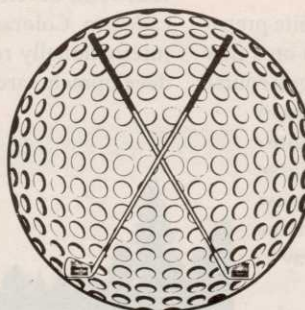
MacCurrach said he hopes Desert Village eventually opens so he can get his money out of the job.

"The bank is ahead of us, but hopefully the course will make it," said MacCurrach. ■

— Andrew Overbeck

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