Night was falling when the golfer completed his 9th and final hole. Too bad. He was just finding his groove. “I sure wish I could play some more,” he said, disappointed the dark ended his stellar round.

Dean Wilson and his father, Charles, were within earshot of the golfer’s remark. The Wilsons, owners of the course the man was playing, turned and gazed at each other with silver dollar-sized eyes when they heard the man speak. Father and son shared the same notion.

“We oughta light this course up,” Charles said, as Dean nodded in approval.

About a year later, Hillcrest GC, located near Houston in Alvin, Texas, was lit up like the Las Vegas strip. The course was equipped with 34-foot-tall light posts from tee to green on each of its nine holes. And, as the Wilsons expected, business began bustling at moonrise.

That was 1994 and nothing has changed, except that night golf is as popular as a pinch of tobacco between the cheek and gum in Houston.

Dean says competitors have opened five lighted, par-3 courses in the area since Hillcrest upped its electric usage.

“Right now it’s 3 p.m., and I’m looking at an empty parking lot,” Dean said. “But at 6:30 p.m., this place will be packed.”

Hillcrest is jammed most nights until about 10 p.m., Dean says. The last golfer might walk off the course at 1 a.m.

“Our business has increased dramatically,” Dean says.

While he refuses to reveal exact sales numbers, Dean did disclose that night golf at Hillcrest boosted profits enough that the family business could afford to build a new, 18-hole, par-72 layout — lighted, of course. The front nine opened in July 1996, the back nine in November 1997.

Dean says Beacon Lakes GC, located about 20 minutes from downtown Houston, takes its name from a Bible passage. “Beacon” means light, according to the Big Book.

Dean says golfers love playing at night for various reasons. There are benefits year-round.

Have you ever tried to tee it up on a sizzling July afternoon in Texas? We’re talking melting.