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**Howard county** — Frank H. Stevens of the Mount Hebron area at Ellicott City, vice-president of Operators Heat, Inc., in Baltimore and head of the firm's Horticulture division.

**Montgomery county** — Tom Harris of Derwood, sales representative for G. L. Cornell Company, a lawn equipment distributor at Gaithersburg; *George B. Thompson* of Gaithersburg, golf course superintendent at Columbia Country Club in Chevy Chase.

**Eastern Shore** — Parker Shirling of Centreville (Queen Annes county), manager for Maryland operations of Princeton Turf.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN GOLF COURSE DEVELOPMENT

By Harry C. Eckhoff, Senior Consultant  
National Golf Foundation

During the past decade 3900 new golf courses including additions to existing facilities have opened for play throughout the United States. Golf course development is continuing at a very stable pace.

The number of new golf course openings during the 10 year span beginning with 1964 ranged from over 500 in 1965 to 266 in 1972 resulting in a yearly average of 390 courses. New course openings for the year just ended (1973) were 322. A breakdown of these openings by types reveals the following:

TYPE	NEW COURSES	COURSE ADDITIONS
Regulation	178	98
Executive	21	9
PAR-3	9	7
	208	114

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Operationally, golf courses fall into one of the following categories: private, semi-private/daily fee and municipal. An analysis of the 322 new course openings for 1973 follows:

TYPE	PRIVATE	DAILY FEE	MUNICIPAL
Regulation	76 (28%)	149 (54%)	51 (18%)
Executive	3 (10%)	25 (83%)	2 (7%)
PAR-3	3 (18%)	8 (50%)	5 (32%)

A study of the golf facility growth pattern reveals that the development of short courses (par-3's and executive layouts) is leveling off. During the last seven years the total for such new courses opening throughout the nation annually has ranged from 37 to 48 (was 46 in 1973).

The leading states with new golf course openings in 1973 were Ohio (34), Michigan (25), California (23), Florida (21), Texas (17), Colorado (16), Tennessee (14), Iowa (13) and North Carolina (11).

Probably the most startling statistic gleaned from the 10 year golf facility development study is the great increase of golf courses associated with land development projects. NGF records indicate that at the beginning of the 10 year span (during 1964) only 16.3% of all the golf courses built were a part of land sales, new planned towns, resort and convention facilities, etc. For 1973 the figure had soared to 40.68%.

And the rate is increasing. Of the total courses now under construction in the nation, 58.97% are reported to be a part of real estate ventures. States that report over 80% of new golf projects in this category include Arizona, Colorado, Florida and Oregon. For Alabama and California, it is 70% or more. A recent directory of Florida real estate developments lists the names of 85 projects where developers are now selling homes or condominiums associated with golf facilities that are already in play.

### What's Ahead

With 290 new golf courses or additions to existing facilities now in some stage of construction in the nation, 1974 should be another normal year for golf course development.

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Florida leads with 31 golf courses now under construction followed by California and Texas each (26), Ohio (21), North Carolina (20), Colorado and Michigan each (14), Indiana and South Carolina each (11), Illinois and Washington each (8), Arizona (7) and Virginia (6).

At year's end, NGF files also contained a list of 292 prospective golf course developments. Regulation courses comprised 245 of the prospects; 23 were for executive type courses and 24 for par-3 layouts.

Leading states in the prospect list were California (29), Florida and Ohio (19), Colorado (18), Virginia (17), Michigan (15), Illinois (12), Arkansas, Indiana and North Carolina (11), Arizona and Pennsylvania (10).

As the nation's official clearing house for golf information, the National Golf Foundation has records on golf course growth since 1931. Each year all new courses are added to NGF's computerized national inventory of golf facilities.

For 1931 - the first year for which figures are available—there were 5691 golf courses of all types in play. In 1961—thirty years later—the total was 6623 or a net increase of only about 16%. But during the period from 1961 through 1973 the inventory jumped to about 10,870—a whopping increase of 64% in 12 years. A look at the relative growth of all types of golf courses in play from 1931 through 1973 reveals an interesting development.

TYPE	1931	1973	CHANGE
Private	4448	4825	+ 377
Daily Fee	700	4610	+ 3910
Municipal	543	1436	+ 893
Totals	5691	10,871	+ 5180

The tremendous growth in public golf courses reflected in the above figures brings clearly into focus the trend in golf course development in recent years. Golf no longer belongs solely to the few; it is Everyman's game.

Population growth, urbanization, more leisure time and increased personal income and mobility continue to put enormous pressure on public recreation facilities including golf courses. A good solution to the demand is more municipal courses owned and operated by cities, counties, states or regional park-recreation districts.

Why municipal golf courses? Practical politics and economics dictate such action.

Land costs and operating expenses, including rising taxes, make it increasingly difficult for member-owned clubs and private courses to financially survive in many communities.

More financial resources are available to municipalities. Among them are sale of general obligation or revenue bonds, federal grants, private development with leaseback and outright public or private donations. Among the federal programs that have assisted municipalities greatly in recent years are the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (Department of Interior) fifty percent matching grants for land acquisition and development of outdoor recreation facilities and the federal surplus property program whereby certain federal lands are conveyed gratis when used for recreational purposes.

Current emphasis on recreation and open space has created more official and citizen support for golf/recreation complexes. Such complexes often include, in addition to a well designed and constructed golf course, tennis courts

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(sometimes lighted for night play), swimming pools, artificial ice skating rinks, playground and picnic areas, a community center building, camping, hiking, nature study and sometimes ski areas.

All the above listed factors are making it easier to sell a municipal golf course proposal to the public. While many new municipal golf courses have been built in recent years, NGF studies reveal there is still an enormous need for more public golf facilities in numerous areas throughout the nation.

Providing assistance in the planning and development of golf courses is one of the principal functions of the National Golf Foundation. Highly trained NGF facility development consultants are available to assist golf course planning groups in making feasibility studies to ascertain their need for golf and outlining a plan of action including methods of financing and operation. Facility development consultants are located at eight strategic locations throughout the country. For further information on these services contact Don Rossi, Executive Director, National Golf Foundation, 707 Merchandise Mart, Chicago, Illinois 60654.

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## WHY ARE SOIL TESTS NECESSARY?

During the coming years we will be facing a continuing shortage of raw materials necessary for the formation of all fertilizers. With this fact in mind it would behoove us all to make use of our university soil labs to determine what specifically our soil requirements will be for all areas of the golf course and club grounds.

In the future soil tests will be used to guide against over-application of fertilizer or eliminate unnecessary amounts of N, P, and K altogether. A soil test reveals your soil texture, pH, available magnesium, phosphorous, and potassium. On the basis of these results, lime and fertilizer can be scientifically recommended for specific turfgrass needs.

Lime and fertilizer are used most efficiently by plants when supplied in the proper amounts. Determining the amounts to apply would be a simple task if the requirements of all plants were the same, and if the capability of all soils to supply plant nutrients were the same. But this is not the case.

Some plants require large amounts of nutrients, while others may be miserly in their needs. It is possible to predict the total plant food requirement of most plants. But without a soil test, it is difficult to predict how much food can be supplied from the soil and how much must be supplied from lime and fertilizer.

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