

### A Light At The End Of The Tunnel?

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For golf courses in the vast West Region, preparing for winter can mean everything from extensive overseeding to snow removal. This year, in the Pacific Northwest, there are also signs of positive economic conditions. During the past several weeks, virtually every golf course visited in Washington, Oregon and British Columbia has improvements underway. Some courses are in the process of renovating with the help of a qualified golf course architect, while others are presenting master plans to their leadership for future changes. This trend marks a major shift from the past decade, during which few improvements were made or discussed due to economic conditions. Recent visits to two courses are especially noteworthy.

At [Seymour Golf and Country Club](#), Superintendent Jim McGarvey has led the complete renovation of nine holes. The renovation included total reconstruction



*Construction on an existing golf course is a positive sign of economic recovery.*

of nearly every green and tee complex along with the addition of much-needed forward tees. Extensive drainage was added to help manage average annual rainfall exceeding 100 inches, and a new irrigation system was installed to help control water costs by improving efficiency. The fairways were sodded with perennial ryegrass and all of the greens were resurfaced with contractually grown *Poa annua* sod that was established using aeration cores from the old greens. Sodding the greens with *Poa annua* eliminated the usual transition from bentgrass sod that inevitably occurs at the site dominated by *Poa annua*. Avoiding the transition means smooth putting surfaces that are consistent with the nonrenovated greens can be expected when the renovated holes reopen next spring. Making all of these improvements has temporarily closed nine holes, but regular tours of the renovations have built positive momentum for when the full course reopens.

Renovations at [Trysting Tree Golf Club](#) in Corvallis, Ore., are also noteworthy. Trysting Tree is the home course for Oregon State University and the golf team needed more room to practice. The course also risked losing two holes to a nearby road expansion. To address these issues, owner Larry Giustina and the board of this public golf course had the vision to buy a large tract of land next to the golf course where they could add two new holes. Under the direction of Golf Course Architect Dan Hixson and Superintendent Pat Doran, CGCS, two outstanding holes have been added. Both holes offer variety in distance and have appropriate forward tees to ensure maximum playability. No new bunkers were added, virtually no trees were planted and fescue native areas are prominently featured. Each of these design features will help control long-term maintenance costs and ensure that the new holes seamlessly match the remainder of the golf course.

Several other courses in the West Region are also implementing or discussing master plans. This trend represents a positive shift for the game of golf. As improvements are planned and implemented, it is important to remember that economic and environmental sustainability are not just buzzwords; they should be part of every golf course's future plans.

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