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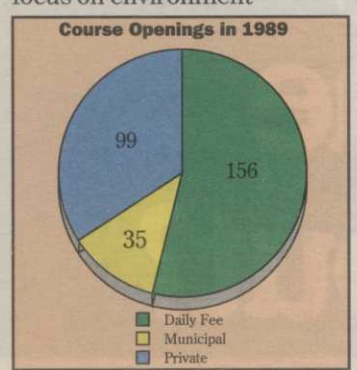
GOLF COURSE NEWS

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Ariz. law threatens growth

BY PETER BLAIS
Arizona is moving ahead with water conservation plans that include limiting the size of most new, 18-hole golf courses to 90 acres within the water management districts. The Phoenix area, because of its higher temperatures and lower rainfall, is restricted to 120 acres.

Opponents argue that the new laws will hurt tourism, the state's second-largest industry, since smaller courses are generally more difficult to play. That will discourage high handicappers, who make up the bulk

of tourist golfers, from visiting the state.

"Normally as a rule of thumb they figure on 130 acres for an 18-hole course. . . I'm sure that 90 acres is going to be very tight," said Donald Rossi, executive director of the Golf Course Builders of America, who believes that environmental concerns could do more to slow the current nationwide golf boom than any other issue.

"They (state of Arizona) have a water problem and they're trying to do something about it. Water is going to be a big problem, not only in Arizona, but all over the country

in another year or two," Rossi said.

Arizona Department of Water Resources Director Bill Plummer signed orders Dec. 5 that provide specific management plans for the Tucson, Phoenix, Prescott and Pinal County active management areas. The department followed that in late December with 10,000 letters to water rights holders informing them of the new requirements.

The law, which was originally adopted in 1986, affects any course where construction started that year. Its aim is to reduce water

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1st course planned for handicapped

BY MARK LESLIE
An Ohio rehabilitation hospital plans to build the first golf facility for the handicapped in a project that could have far-reaching effects on golf courses nationwide.

Lessons learned from the technologies and designs used at the course at Edwin Shaw Hospital in Akron may usher in a new era, especially for municipal courses that must abide by laws making public facilities accessible to the handicapped.

The project of the hospital's Development Foundation has drawn support and it promises to provide challenges for all involved, from the design work (donated by Hurdzan Design Group of Columbus, Ohio) to the construction (some part of which is a gift of Wadsworth Construction Co. of Plainfield, Ill.) and finances (which include donations from the World Series of Golf, Wilson Sporting Goods and MacGregor Golf).

The hospital's vice president for development, Linda Cinson, said officials will soon decide exactly what type of facility to add to its current small driving range and two practice greens. They are leaning toward initially building a large driving range and three holes. Another six holes could follow later.

They hope to get construction started by this fall, probably building the driving range first so that it can be used even before year's end.

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Photo courtesy of Nelson & Wright
Officials hope West Loch Golf Course has sextupled in value before evening opening.

Lease one, build two

BY MARK LESLIE
Honolulu could earn a quick \$100 million if investors bid on a proposed lease for the just-completed municipal West Loch Golf Course in Ewa.

Mayor Frank Fasi, for years Hawaii's leading critic of foreign investment, has proposed what may be an unprecedented build-lease arrangement. He hopes to lease or sell the course and clubhouse, which cost the city \$20 million to build, for \$100 million or more and use the profits to build two golf courses plus af-

fordable housing.

The West Loch project sailed through the permit process while private ventures in Honolulu remain mired in the bureaucratic red tape. Officials feel potential developers may be willing to pay the large lease fee rather than tie up funds in the lengthy permit process.

The surprise is that "no one has said that's (amount of money) out of line. Everybody I hear is saying, 'That's reasonable,'" said Dave Mills, administrator for

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Environment the major concern of architects

BY MARK LESLIE
Environmental issues running the gamut from wetlands to pesticide use are the most important problems facing golf course architects, according to a Golf Course News survey of the nation's leading architects.

Of the 55 architects who responded to the question of what is the most important issue

they face, 37 listed a topic concerning the environment.

Several other issues received from one to seven mentions from architects, including the cost of construction and maintenance; water usage; keeping design natural; financing; obtaining permits; finding qualified help; the speed of play; the distance golfers are

hitting the ball; the speed of the greens; and the influence of the professional tour on standards of maintenance.

The overwhelming response that environment was the major concern came from every region of the United States.

Denis Griffiths of Braselton, Ga., decried

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Honolulu

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the Golf Course Division of the City and County of Honolulu Managing Director's Office.

"I don't think it's far-fetched," said Ron Duran, who as executive assistant to Managing Director Jeremy Harris, has been closely involved with West Loch since its inception 1 1/2 years ago. "Beach homes are now selling up to \$20 million ... and waterfront property is going for \$5-\$10 million."

March 15 is the deadline for bids and by mid-February more than 20 people had spent the \$100 necessary to buy the specs.

Who has taken the specs is unknown, although Duran and Mills believe wealthy Japanese developers — among those enduring the long wait for approvals on projects — must be interested.

"There are 40 golf courses on the drawing board and seeking permits from the government, and you have an attitude of the government that you've got enough golf courses, and all new sorts of regulations are coming into play in the Legislature as well as the City Council," Duran said. "It's going to be difficult to implement these golf courses, so, from that standpoint, it makes that \$100 million not too much money."

"When you stop to think that in Japan right now a membership costs \$1 million or more, you only need 100 members to form a golf club."

Duran said the initial interest in the lease is from "promoters who probably have contacts with foreign investors, primarily the Japanese. What is the commission on a sale of that magnitude? So the interest we're getting may only be the promoters."

Fasi told the Honolulu Advertiser: "Since I can't stop them (foreign investors), I'm going to try to realize what I can for the city."

Under the agreement Honolulu proposes, the course would be semi-public for the first two years; the operator would have to allow 150 rounds a day to residents. After two years it would become a private course and the leasee could sell memberships.

There is also the possibility of the city selling the course through an option that carries an additional price tag of just \$4 million.

Once the bids are all in on March 15, the Managing Director's Office will review them and negotiate with bidders if necessary.

The ultimate decision to accept a bid, however, lies with the City Council. Indications is that most of the councilors support the idea.

"It has not been put to vote," Duran said, but approval takes six votes from the nine-member council and "only one or possibly two have said anything negative about it."

He added: "It sounds like a real good idea. For example, assuming we sell it and end up with two more public golf courses, and in the meantime we can fix the prices that the purchaser charges for the

local people to play golf, I think it's a good deal."

Among the conditions the city expects to impose during the first two years of lease agreement are:

- Hawaii residents will be charged \$27 a round on weekdays and \$32 per round on weekends and holidays. Non-residents will pay market rates.

- A non-refundable \$2-million deposit will be required of the highest bidder.

Mills said the city could open the course on April 1. Any leasee or buyer would have to open by May 15.

Designed by Nelson & Wright

of Hawaii, the 178-acre, 18-hole course has received the award for excellence in planning by the Hawaii Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. It was designed and built to withstand the flooding in Central Oahu, and Robin Nelson and Rodney Wright consider it the most complicated and environmentally sensitive course either has worked on.

For his part, Mayor Fasi is already looking ahead to the prospects of building two more municipal courses and \$40 million or so in affordable housing.

He said their construction is "guaranteed."

Shangri-La facilities face \$7M facelift

Club Resorts Inc. of Dallas, Texas, plans a \$7-million remodeling of the golf courses, public areas and 500 guest rooms at Shangri-La, a regional conference facility and full-service golf resort the company bought in northeastern Oklahoma.

A \$1.5-million renovation plan had already been implemented by the previous owner, Resorts, Inc., a subsidiary of Tulsa, Okla.-based Fourth National Bank.

"Shangri-La is in the same restoration category that world-famous Pinehurst Hotel & Country Club fell under when we purchased it in

1984," said Allen Anderson, Club Resorts' vice president of sales and marketing.

It is the third major property purchase by Club Resorts in the last 18 months, joining Pinehurst in North Carolina and Barton Creek Conference Resort in Austin, Texas.

Anderson said the resort will remain fully operational during the renovations.

It encompasses two championship golf courses, full-service health spa, bowling, indoor and outdoor tennis and swimming and other facilities.

