

Industry preparing for a busy winter

It seems like just yesterday I was writing about the upcoming summer season and all the work that goes with readying a course... Now it's time to prepare the Northern courses for fall and winter. Southern courses will be overseeding soon to keep things green as long as possible.

We in the industry are getting ready for a very busy winter of conferences, shows and other business-support activities.

One thing on the minds of everyone I talk to is the economy. The savings and loan disaster will affect how money is loaned — which means golf facilities will be harder



C. von Brecht

than ever to finance.

I believe this is not necessarily bad news for the industry's growth. It will virtually eliminate those who may want to take a shot at a golf project but back down when times get a little tough. We will see the serious investors — those with deeper pockets — put up more capital to see a project through to completion and profitability.

My opinion is that in this decade there will be far fewer failures of new facilities because the financial underwriters will require stronger financial involvement by the developers.

In recent client meetings, much discussion has revolved around the stability of the golf course business in a recession economy.

Although no industry is recession-proof, the majority of suppliers with whom I've spoken feel the golf course industry is recession-resistant.

I am most optimistic about the coming year for more controlled new course development and continued renovations to the older courses.

One sure way to hear many views on the future of golf is to attend the

National Golf Foundation Golf Summit 90, Nov. 12-13 in Palm Springs, Calif. I'm sure Joe Beditz and his associates will have some interesting information to share with the conference participants. For more information on the summit, contact the NGF at 407-744-6006.

We have added a new feature in this issue. The *Regional News* section appears on page 15.

This monthly report will keep readers up to date on shows, seminars, association elections and other noteworthy regional news. Organization, are encouraged to send items for the report to our editorial offices.

Sincerely,
Charles E. von Brecht
publisher

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Lobbyists would help

The farmers have their lobbyists. So do the hospitals and hotels. And so also the paper and steel industries, petroleum and mining associations, banks and utilities.

Except for golf, every major business or association pays people to lobby legislators in state capitols. They tell their clients' side of the story, lending insight, persuading, cajoling, bending ears — and twisting arms.

Major decisions everywhere are affected by flora and fauna, flowing waters and fawning animals, open space and no space, steep grades and lowlands, land-fills and air-ports, bear corridors and fox dens, eagle nests and rabbit warrens, land-planning... You name it.

Architect Tom Clark designed 120 golf courses in the last year, yet had only 12 under construction.

"It's all a by-product of the S&Ls and environmental issues. It's getting ludicrous," he said. "People

COMMENT



Mark Leslie

with money for a project can't get the approval. Those with land get approved but can't find the money."

The government continues an easy target as the villain in this muddle, what with such acronym tongue-twisters as FIFRA, RCRA, TSCA, OSHA, CPSA, FFDC, CAA, HMTA, SDWA, CERCLA and CWA. And that's just the EPA's garble of laws.

Yet complaining about garble will not cause positive changes. The \$5 billion-a-year golf industry's need for a voice in Tallahassee has led to creation of the Florida Golf Council.

Hopefully, other states or regions will follow suit.

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United Publications, Inc.
Publishers of specialized business and consumer magazines

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