

California development on slow but steady pace ahead

Golf course developers all over California are slowing their pace — but not stopping altogether — as the recession and housing slump bite into the market.

In Desert Hot Springs, a Beverly Hills developer, Edwin Vlessing, still wants to have his 2,200-acre Rancho Royale project annexed to Desert Hot Springs and approved for 9,000 homes. Rancho Royale, with 20,000 residents, would more than double the city's population of 12,300.

"We really hope to change the image of the city of Desert Hot

Springs and bring the city into the 21st century," Vlessing said. He hopes to have the project completed within 10 years, though it might take 30 years, depending on the region's economy. The \$1-billion price tag is being picked up by Asian investors, leaving Vlessing's own company debt-free.

The 3-1/2-square-mile development, which straddles Highway 62, will contain elementary and middle schools neighborhood shopping areas and a regional mall, and three golf courses. Desert Hot Springs

Mayor John Isaacs said the city wants to approve the merger soon.

WILDWING CLEARED FOR TAKEOFF

In Woodland, an 18-hole golf course, country club and 338 homes making up a development called Wildwing cleared six years of legal and bureaucratic hurdles to gain county approval recently.

Pinehurst Land and Development may be able to start construction on the 237-acre project by the end of the year. Turmoil within the county Planning De-

partment and new environmental concerns led to much of the delays.

Pheasant Glen Golf Course, another new 18-hole course proposed for Yolo County, will use 150 acres of a 441-acre parcel on Reiff vineyard land northwest of Woodland.

PALMDALE PLANS

In Palmdale, a flood control plan includes a \$900,000 basin in the Quartz Hill area on land proposed for a private golf course. Ahmanson Developments Inc., the company planning the course for the Rancho

Vista community, will pay \$150,000 toward the 76 million-gallon basin.

ENVIRONMENTALISTS RISE UP

In Redwood City, 25 groups representing environmentalists, joggers, horseback riders and others announced their opposition to a golf course planned for San Mateo County's Edgewood Park.

The nine-hole course would disturb too much of the 467-acre park, known for its carpets of wildflowers and views of the bay, say opposition members.

Supervisors support a golf course because of the increasing popularity of the sport. Golfers have long asked the county to build a public course because private links are too crowded and expensive.

The county would lease the acreage to the developer of the \$2.5-million course. The course is planned for only a fraction of the entire park, but most of the remaining land has steep ravines and is too rugged for recreation.

Additional impact studies would have to be completed before the course would be built. The park draws 50,000 people a year.

WEATHER DELAYS HARMFUL

The Madera City Council learned in November that the city's new golf course needed \$440,000 to meet its loan and \$50,000 to stay open. After the city accepted the course from the contractor last December, a freeze ruined the putting greens.

The course opened in June, but autumn income fell below projections. The chief groundskeeper told council members that 75 percent of the 12,000 sprinkler heads on the 150-acre course were in the wrong place and many trees died because the sprinklers didn't water them. Irrigation and rainstorms flood the course.

\$415-MILLION PROJECT AIRED

A new \$14-million course for Carlsbad at Lake Calavera is part of a 20-year, \$415-million capital improvement program for the city.

The plan calls for 185 projects. During the public hearings for the capital plan, speakers called the golf course financially questionable, water-guzzling and environmentally damaging.

Panel to study Ore. golf demand

MEDFORD, Ore. — A Golf Course-Resort Committee has been formed by the Chamber of Medford/Jackson County in Oregon to respond to the demand for more facilities.

The committee was formed after the chamber's convention center consultants, Shiels & Oblatz, surveyed associations on reasons why they didn't consider the Medford area for conventions. One of the main reasons was lack of a resort.

Central Oregon ranks higher with business associations, partially because of the availability of golfing.

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