

PGA finally prevails in \$1.6B mega-plan for Hall, courses

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Ending 18 months of on-again, off-again speculation and frustration, the proposed \$1.6-billion PGA complex that will have as its crown jewel the PGA Tour Hall of Fame has found a home 20 miles south of Jacksonville and 10 miles north of St. Augustine.

Located at the intersection of I-95 and Nine Mile Road in northern St. Johns County, just across the Duval County line, the Saint Johns development will encompass the Golf Hall, national headquarters for the Tour's video and production company, golf academy, resort convention center and 700-room hotel with two 18-hole courses.

The Florida Department of Community Affairs and developer Jim Davidson signed the agreement, ending weeks of wrangling. The St. Johns County Commission ratified the pact after spelling out Davidson's responsibilities for improvement of I-95 linked to building the 6,300-acre development south-east of Orangedale.

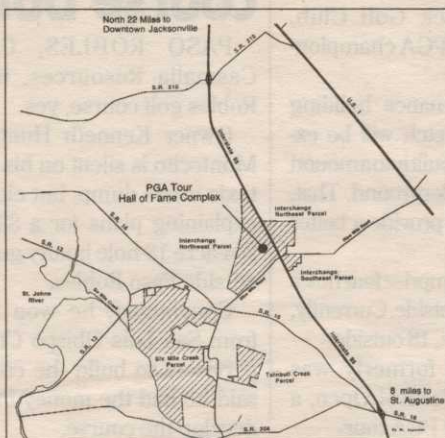
Davidson's cost was set at \$800,000, but that figure may not be firm. If the Florida Department of Transportation completes the interchange work before Davidson is ready to begin a third phase of development, there would be little or no expense for Davidson.

Davidson earlier had rejected as "absolutely ludicrous" a suggestion by state officials that he pay up to \$4 million of the estimated cost of \$20 million.

Tour official Richard Bowers said the Tour will refund to Jacksonville the \$896,000 the city put up to land the PGA Tour Productions facility, which will move to the St. Johns County site.

A proposed site on Julington-Durbin Park peninsula in the Mandarin area was abandoned in September because of concerns about obtaining environmental permits.

"The St. Johns site has received the necessary development permits, including completion of the Development of Regional Impact process," said Vernon Kelly, president of PGA Tour Investments, Inc. "The



construction of the Hall of Fame and related development would be environmentally compatible."

The development and \$70-million PGA Tour Hall of Fame complex would be constructed over five five-year phases. The Hall would be built first.

The Hall will honor competitors and innovators who have played a formative role in establishing the Tour as a leader in the sports industry.

Hall displays will detail Tour history, collections that will range from memorabilia to hands-on, computer-driven displays that will invoke state-of-the-art technology.

"This project will be a memorial to the players and sportsmen who have made the Tour so successful," said Deane R. Beman, PGA Tour commissioner.

Overall development would include 7,200 residential units and 6.4 million square feet of commercial, industrial and office space. It would create 25,542 construction jobs and 13,150 permanent jobs.

Bowers said the Hall could attract 1 million tourists a year and help tourism-related businesses such as motels and restaurants.

County officials foresee infusion of \$23.3 million a year in property-tax revenue, much stemming from 17,000 new residents.

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LPGA breaks ground on project

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — The Ladies Professional Golf Association has taken the first step for its new resort development here.

Groundbreaking ceremonies were held Dec. 2 for the start of the entrance road to its new headquarters and golf courses.

N.J. proposals may be revived

Proposed administration deregulation of millions of acres of freshwater wetlands could mean revival of major southern New Jersey building projects in Cape May County.

Officials there are talking of dusting off plans for a public golf course and a new north-south highway scuttled the past two years because proposed construction sites contained land considered freshwater wetlands under existing laws.

President Bush's proposal would remove up to half the freshwater wetlands from protection.

"I would recommend a revisit of both (golf course and highway) projects should that come to pass," said Cape May County Freeholder Director William E. Sturm Jr.

Environmental interests say such lands are too valuable to build on, and the projects should be forgotten.