

Tee times

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"The rush of calls we had when we opened the tee time window, if you will, has dropped off considerably," said Reed Pryor, golf administrator for the 12 courses operated by the Indianapolis Department of Parks and Recreation. "Overall, the staff has more time to concentrate on sales in the pro shop, or what have you. The system is working very, very well."

Handling tee times by phone does require an adjustment, and the process is not without its potentially negative developments. For example, Pryor said some of his pros felt the new system meant a certain loss of control — particularly with regard to twilight leagues.

Furthermore, Fairway System clients — Pryor among them — reported a six percent drop in food & beverage sales. This makes sense: Players with reserved tee times don't put their names on a list and sit in the bar for 90 minutes.

"Nobody can deny the potential for that is there," said Pryor. "But I think so many people are conscious of their time nowadays, milling about the pro shop and having a few hot dogs isn't what they want to do."

To compensate for no-shows, most courses with computer reservation systems require golfers to arrive 30 to 40 minutes in advance. In theory, this leaves time for a quick morsel and libation. Besides, Dupuis believes, "food & beverage sales are more a function of atmosphere than hanging around waiting for a tee time."

On the other hand, two Xeta customers have found the system has cleaned out the clubhouse, which has bolstered F&B business. "People used to see big crowds at the turn, and they wouldn't go in the clubhouse," said Xeta's Gary Crews.

For the golf course owner, the question of automated reservation systems is more black and white: Computerized tee times appear to be money-makers.

The Fairway Systems survey reported net income increases of \$12,500 at its 39 member courses. Xeta reports similar numbers.

Both firms indicated that nearly all client courses issue a reservation card with an annual fee of \$10 to \$50; or they charge a reservation fee of \$.50 to \$4 per golfer per tee time. Multiply that by the number of rounds handled by computer and you've created significant new income.

Shaker Hills, for one, does not charge a fee, while the 12 Indianapolis courses on Pryor's watch have incorporated a reservation charge into greens fees.

"We're all new at this, and so are the golfers," explained Pryor. "So we're all learning and changing things as we go along. But from what I've seen, the pros outweigh the cons."

New NGCOA chapter in Florida

The Central Florida Chapter of the National Golf Course Owners Association was formed May 18 by owners and operators of golf courses in and around the Orlando area.

Bill Stine, the owner and operator of Kissimmee Bay Golf Course, was elected president.

Stine said the chapter's mission is "to organize the

owners into an industrial force in the central Florida area. We want to work towards solving mutual problems and promoting the game of golf in our state."

He said the chapter is looking forward to a close relationship with the national association in which all could benefit from the knowledge and expertise of owners from across the nation.

Hinckley to run Club Resorts

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ment of properties which are owned by fiscally sound establishments.

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