

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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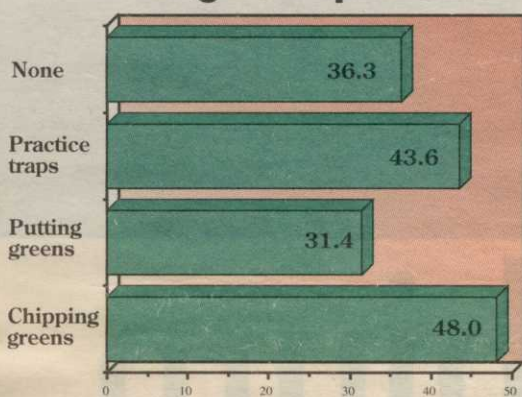
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## A range of options



Many U.S. practice facilities offer chipping and putting greens and practice traps. This graph shows the percentages of surveyed ranges that offer these services. Ranges that operate at or close to a year-round basis are more likely to offer practice areas.

Source: National Golf Foundation

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## Grads facing uncertain future

By Peter Blais

Turf school graduates are having more trouble finding entry-level jobs as assistant superintendents than they did a year ago, according to college officials.

"We usually graduate 45 to 50 students," said Professor Richard Cooper, coordinator of the University of Massachusetts two-year turf management program.

"Last year was the first time they weren't all able to get jobs. This year it's been even worse. It's taking a lot more work to find positions."

Cooper blames a weak economy, particularly in the Northeast, for the bleak job

Continued on page 8

## Cat strike leaves mark on industry

By Hal Phillips

PEORIA, ILL. — Wadsworth Construction Co. held a unique perspective on the year's most visible labor dispute, in terms of industry and geography.

Located in Plainfield, Ill., Wadsworth observed the five-month strike at nearby Caterpillar Inc. from close range.

"We've got Cat plants on both sides of us, in Aurora and Joliet," said Paul Eldredge, president of Wadsworth. Before the April 15 settlement, Eldredge indicated he felt Caterpillar was in good position to wait out its discontented work-

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Gen Morita wants all golf construction halted, including Perry Dye's Royal Hawaiian (above).

## Japanese course basher sets sights on Hawaii

By Peter Blais

His goal is nothing short of stopping all golf course development, period. And Hawaii is his latest target.

"It's not possible to build a good golf course," said Gen Morita of the The Global Network for Anti-Golf Course Action. "You can't put something like that on 150 acres and expect it to not hurt the environment, unless you stick it in the middle of the desert. But if you build it in the usual way, it's just not possible."

Before developers dismiss the 44-year-old Japanese activist as just another fly in

the ointment, they ought to consider his record.

Morita claims to have had a hand in stopping construction of 280 Japanese courses through his work with the Japan National Network Against Resort and Golf Course Development. Since 1988, the group has helped obtain moratoriums against new development in 10 of Japan's 46 prefectures.

With Japanese corporations financing many of Hawaii's new courses, Morita turned his attention to the 50th state last

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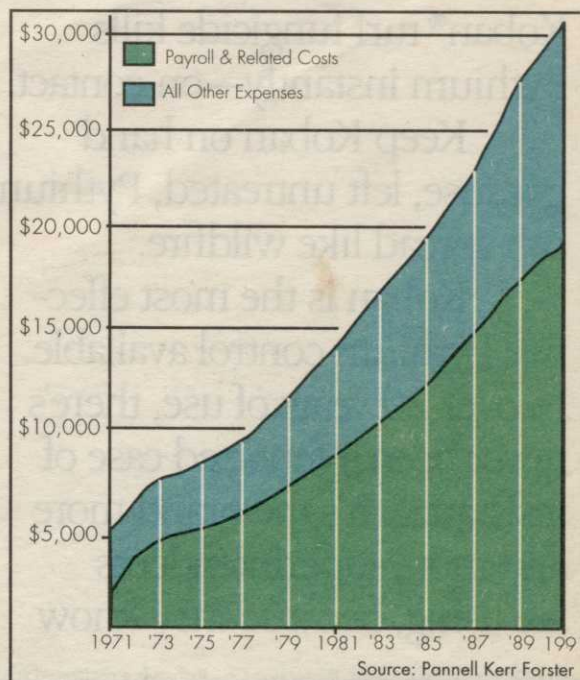
## Maintenance costs continue upward spiral

From Staff Reports

Higher payroll expenses caused country club maintenance costs to jump almost 10 percent last year, despite efforts to cut back on repairs and other costs.

Average payroll climbed 10 percent (to \$15,888 per hole) while payroll taxes and benefits rose 16.8 percent (to \$3,610 per hole) at 250 private U.S. country clubs surveyed by the accounting firm of Pannell Kerr Forster in its 1992 Clubs in Town & Country report.

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Source: Pannell Kerr Forster

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# Japanese course basher takes arguments to Hawaii

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fall. Morita said more than 100 projects are under construction or planned in Hawaii. Better than half involve Japanese corporations. Japanese companies own 35 percent of the state's agricultural land, prime areas for future golf course development, he added.

"I understand he's pretty persuasive with the people in Japan and with some of the environmental groups in Hawaii. I imagine they've welcomed him with open arms. A lot of development is being financed with Japanese money and there are people only too happy here to listen to his message," said Dennis Vogt, Dye Designs International's director of turf maintenance and head su-

perintendent of Royal Hawaiian Country Club, a 36-hole course scheduled to open its first 18 in June.

Morita first spoke at a community-based anti-golf conference sponsored by the Hawaii Golf Course Action Alliance in November. He returned for two weeks in January, touring some of the state's most controversial developments, speaking at anti-golf development meetings and testifying before local governing bodies.

Was he effective?

"I testified before the Honolulu City Council on one project in the morning and he testified on another in the afternoon," said environmental consultant Stuart Cohen of

Environmental & Turf Services Inc. of Wheaton, Md.

"I didn't hear him. All I know is the council approved the project I was working on and rejected the one he talked about."

Doug Jones, a reporter with the Hilo Hawaii Tribune Herald on the Big Island of Hawaii, where a course development moratorium has been considered, covered Morita's visits.

"He has a very understated approach, speaks English well and is very persuasive," Jones said.

In his younger days, Morita operated a Tokyo-based trading company and played golf occasionally. Seeking a simpler lifestyle,

he sold his business and moved 100 miles from Tokyo to smaller Kamogawa in Chiba Prefecture. He became a subsistence farmer, joining a Buddhist temple that promoted a natural gardening method that even forbid the tilling of soil.

A developer wanted to build six golf courses and a marina nearby, Morita said. Opponents told him about their concerns, particularly regarding the project's effects on the local watershed.

"That was the first time I became aware of the environmental problems with golf," Morita said.

He has since become Japan's leading anti-

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# Basher wants to stop any and all golf developments

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golf development voice on the international scene, basically because "no one else in our group speaks English that well."

Morita objects to golf courses for environmental, social and cultural reasons.

Japan has more than 1,800 golf courses and many have caused environmental problems, according to Morita. Japan and Hawaii are both island groups with mountainous landscapes that have been transformed into golf courses, Morita said.

"I fear some of the same things are happening to Hawaii's environment that happened in Japan," he said. "There is huge destruction of the landscape. Large amounts of soil are moved and hills cut down."

Golf course fertilizers and pesticides leach into ground water, despite claims by industry officials that, when properly applied, they are trapped within the turf, Morita said.

"Golf courses are trying to limit the amount of chemicals they use because they know how dangerous they are," he said. "We feel it's our duty to inform people they are being attacked by golf course developers."

Vogt countered that Royal Hawaiian has had all chemicals and fertilizers cleared with the appropriate state and federal agencies and will employ an integrated pest management plan to minimize chemical use.

"We don't use chemicals if we don't need them," Vogt assured.

Socially, golf courses, particularly at resort facilities like those dominating Hawaiian development, cater exclusively to rich people who can "afford \$300 or \$400 hotel rooms and \$100 to play golf," Morita said.

Japanese resort developers are land speculators, the former businessman said. They drive up land prices, making it too expensive for local people to buy. The jobs they create are low-paying and the resorts generate little in new taxes, he added.

"They promise high-paying jobs and more tax dollars, but they never deliver. No one benefits except the corporations and a few politicians. That's what happened on Okinawa. And the siltation from the courses also destroyed the coral beds," he said.

Morita's message has struck a chord with the residents of Hawaii's Big Island, where some have accused Mayor Lorraine Inoue of using her influence with the local planning board to bend the zoning rules for a Kona developer, Jones said.

The developer, who reportedly contributed \$21,000 to the mayor's election campaign, received an accessory-use permit for a 54-room inn adjacent to the golf course, instead of having to go through a separate permit process, he added.

Some members of the City Council want the power to approve golf courses taken away from the

mayor-appointed planning board and given to the voter-elected council, Jones said. The Hawaii Golf Course Action Alliance's Protheroe thinks it's a good idea.

Culturally, golf resorts rob an area of its local flavor, Morita said. Resort hotels, rooms, service and golf courses are basically the same anywhere in the world, he added.

"Developers don't care about the local culture. They don't make their

resorts blend in," he said.

Anti-golf forces have stopped development in Japan by using education and convincing government boards to deny permits. Showing a connection between a project and the yakuza, Japan's organized crime syndicate, has also brought many projects to a halt.

"Japanese regulations have gotten very tough for the yakuza the past two or three years. It's pushed them out of the country to areas with less stringent regulations, less opposition and cheaper land. Hawaii is one of those places they are looking at," Morita said.

"We've pushed the yakuza out of Japan and into other countries. We feel partly responsible for their efforts to develop overseas. That's why we've established the Global Network, to oppose all golf course development throughout the world. Human beings can't afford golf courses anymore."

Added Protheroe: "There's tremendous sensitivity here to yakuza money. People want to learn more about them. We hear some of the same intimidation tactics they use in Japan are going on here."

Vogt said he hasn't seen any connections between Hawaiian development and yakuza. Anti-

golf groups have tried to connect Royal Hawaiian's Japanese developer Y.Y. Corp. with organized crime, he added.

"It's not valid," Vogt said. "They've made statements that the course will never be finished. It's hurting membership sales some, but we'll get through it."

Morita is working with Japanese journalist Tsutomu Kuji on a book concerning Japanese investment in Hawaiian resorts and plans future visits to the island state.

"We want to stop all golf course development in Hawaii," he said. "There are 75 courses there already on a very small group of islands. That's enough."

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