

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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Some developers believe golf course construction may outpace demand 6

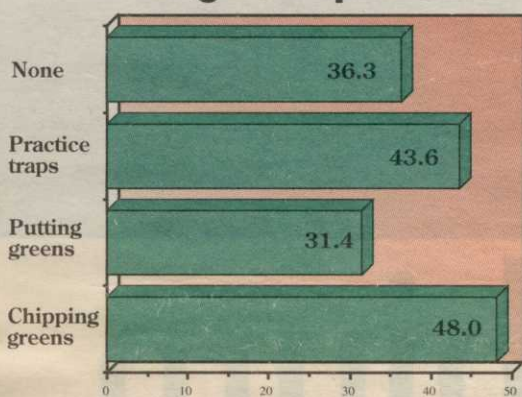
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A range of options



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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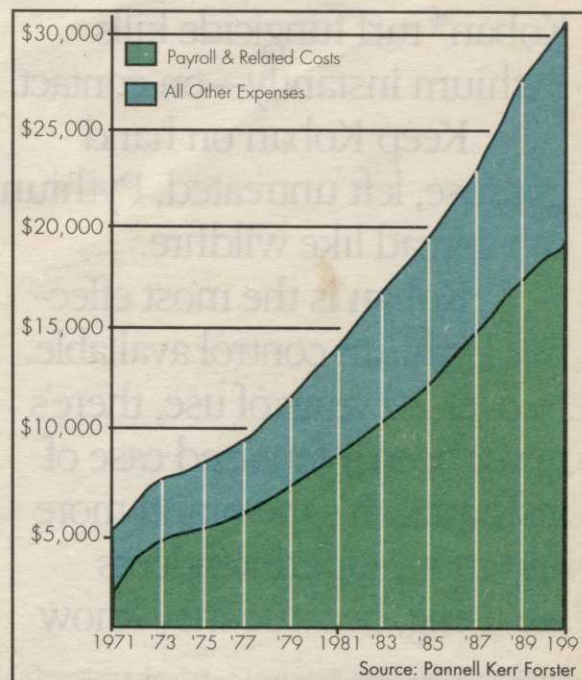
Maintenance costs continue upward spiral

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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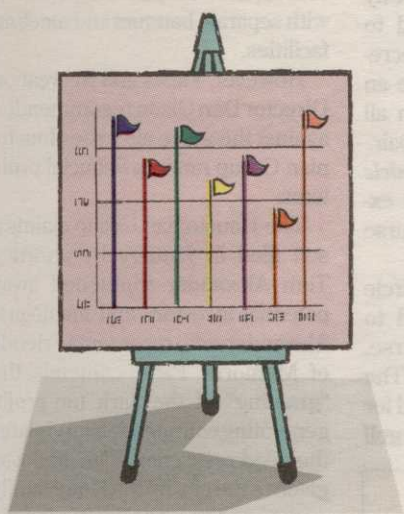


Source: Pannell Kerr Forster

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Briefs



BURNT STORE BOUGHT

PLANT CITY, Fla. — Sun City Center Corp. and Walden Lake Inc. have purchased Burnt Store Marina Resort from BancFlorida.

The 640-acre Burnt Store Marina Resort — a planned waterfront community on Charlotte Harbor, opposite the Boca Grande pass to the Gulf of Mexico — features 27 holes of golf, the largest marina on Florida's west coast, a restaurant and hotel. Burnt Store Marina will host the 1992 Olympic Soling (a type of sailing) Trials this spring.

About 400 condominiums currently exist at Burnt Store, but plans are underway to begin the development of new single-family homes.

Also announced is a new name, "Florida Design Communities," to become the 'umbrella' identity for the developer's portfolio.

"As we expand and develop new communities, we want a common identity so that our potential customers can tie our operations together," according to Al Hoffman, chairman of Sun City Center and Walden Lake.

NCA NAMES GOV'T EXPERT

The National Club Association has named Elizabeth Kirby Hart its director of government relations.

Hart recently worked as issues director for a statewide gubernatorial campaign during the last primary and general election.

Prior to that she was executive assistant and chief policy adviser to the chairman and chief executive officer of the Farm Credit Administration, providing examination and regulatory oversight to the \$50-billion cooperative Farm Credit System.

She has also been special assistant to the General Counsel for the U.S. Department of Transportation and as director of governmental affairs for a Los Angeles financial institution.

IRWIN ADDS ANOTHER COURSE

The newest course to fall under Hale Irwin Golf Services Inc.'s management umbrella is set to open in early May.

Fourche Valley Golf Club, developed by Sunnen Products Co. of St. Louis and leased to the Fourche Valley Public Golf Association, is located near Potosi, Mo., next to the YMCA of the Ozarks Trout Lodge Family & Conference Center on Sunnen Lake.

The course will feature zoysia tees, ryegrass fairways and bentgrass greens.

Alfonso elected to head NGCOA

Illinois course owner heads slate of new officers for golf course owners association

The National Golf Course Owner's Association has elected Vince Alfonso Jr. as president. Jim Scott of Michigan was elected vice president; Garry N. Black of Texas treasurer; and Charles H. Berrell of Ohio secretary.

Alfonso is partner with Leonard and Lovene Sapp in The Rail Golf Club, Inc., in Springfield, Ill. In addition to serving as the chief operating officer of The Rail Golf Club,

Alfonso is the head professional and general manager. He has been a Class A member of the PGA of America for 12 years.

After serving his apprenticeship working under his father, PGA life member Vince Alfonso Sr., Vince Jr. spent five years as head professional and general manager of Holiday Golf Club in Olive Branch, Miss., prior to arriving at The Rail in 1983.

He has been a member of the NGCOA since 1983 and has served the organization as a member of its board of directors for the past eight years.

Scott has been a golf professional for 20 years, a PGA member for 14 years, a charter member of the NGCOA, and involved in the golf business for 30 years. He is a co-owner and director of golf of Gull Lake

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Casper promotes twosome

VIENNA, Va. — Billy Casper Golf Management, Inc. has promoted F. Thomas Martty to senior vice president of operations and Jim R. Watkins as vice president of golf course operations.



Jim Watkins

Martty, who joined BCGM in 1989 as vice president of operations, has more than 25 years experience in the field of golf management, consultation and promotion. He was a partner in Creative Golf Consultants, a firm that specialized in membership solicitation, promotions and golf operations, and served as membership consultant to golf clubs in Kansas, Texas and Louisiana.

Martty has also owned and operated several clubs, including Briarwood Country Club in Baton Rouge, and Oak Knoll Country Club in Hammond, La. He has assisted in the coordination of PGA Business Schools I and II, taught numerous PGA management and leasing seminars, and served on several PGA committees and boards. President of the Louisiana PGA, he also served as secretary and treasurer of the Gulf States PGA.

Founded in 1989 by Robert Morris and Peter Hill, Billy Casper Golf Management is headquartered here and has a regional office in Tokyo, Japan.

Watkins has been project manager and designer for Palm Beach Golf & Sports; director of golf course operations for Frenchman's Creek Golf Club and the Country Club of Florida; director of golf and grounds maintenance for DeLaire Golf Club and Yacht Country Club; and the project coordinator and designer for Clemson University. In addition, he was a member of the Tournament Support Committee for the Masters Golf Tournament in Augusta, Ga.

As vice president of golf course operations, Watkins will be responsible for preparing all budgets, overseeing golf course operations, hiring and training maintenance personnel, serving as liaison with course owners and developers, keeping club memberships informed, and improving courses through redesign and state-of-the-art maintenance and planning. Watkins can also help clubs set up and prepare for tournament conditions.



F. Thomas Martty

Georgia firm buys Champion Hills

HENDERSONVILLE, N.C. — The Branigar Organization, a real-estate development company based in Savannah, Ga., plans to buy Champion Hills, an exclusive 525-acre mountain community and private golf club here.

Branigar is a subsidiary of Union Camp Corp. Terms of the sale were not disclosed.

"Based on our learning from national market research and an extensive two-year new project search, we feel that Champion Hills will have tremendous appeal," said Cecil Abarr, president of The Branigar Organization.

Champion Hills community will be limited to approximately 400 total estate homesites and villas. Fifty-eight homesites have been purchased by individuals thus far. The centerpiece of the community is a 6,719-yard, par-71 golf course designed by Hendersonville resident Tom Fazio.

"From the initial planning stage, I felt we had the opportunity to create one of the most outstanding courses and communities in this country," said Fazio. "And Branigar, with whom I've worked before at The Landings on Skidaway Island, is the ideal group to develop the community around the course. As Champion Hills will continue to be my home course and club, I'm very excited about the future here."

Private country club maintenance costs rise 10 percent

Continued from page 1

"The cost of labor is intense," said David Fearis, head superintendent at Blue Hills Country Club in Kansas City, Mo. Fearis was one of the featured speakers at this winter's Club Managers Association of America annual conference, where some of the report's findings were first revealed.

"No one here is making less than \$6 per hour. That isn't much considering they are operating \$40,000 to \$50,000 machines.

"And benefits, like insurance, just kill you. All types have gone up. But you have to offer insurance coverage to employees if you're going to compete for the available labor pool."

Rising personnel costs, which now total 63 cents of every maintenance dollar, pushed the nationwide average maintenance cost per hole to \$30,870, up 9.8 percent from a year earlier. The increase continues a 20-year trend during which maintenance costs have risen 500 percent.

"Members have such high expectations today," Fearis said. "That takes people and specialized machines. Some courses are just maintenance nightmares, the ones where you have to hand mow the fairway mounds, for instance. That costs a lot of money."

Cutbacks last year in repairs to equipment, buildings, water and drainage systems (down 4.1 percent to \$2,695 per hole) and all other expenses (down 5.1 percent to \$2,773 per

Golf course maintenance costs by region					
	Nat'l avg	East	South	Midwest	West
Payroll	\$15,888	14,959	15,291	12,302	18,781
Taxes & benefits	3,610	3,123	2,919	2,544	5,396
Supplies & cont.	5,904	5,761	6,097	5,423	6,043
Repairs	2,695	2,351	2,872	1,742	3,303
All other	2,773	1,797	3,142	1,518	4,422
Total	\$30,870	27,991	30,321	23,529	37,945

Source: Pannell Kerr Forster

hole) helped hold down the overall increase.

"Superintendents are becoming more aware of their budgets and trying to get a better handle on things like repairs," Fearis said. "But machinery is so specialized and so expensive, there are limits to how much you can cut there."

Regionally, total golf course maintenance averaged \$37,945 per hole (up 10.5 percent) west of the Rockies, the most expensive area in the nation. The Far West was followed by the South at \$30,321 (up 10.5 percent), East at \$27,991 (up 11.3 percent) and Midwest at \$23,529 (up 4.3 percent).

On the income side, country club membership increased 1.4 percent with dues up 7.3 percent. Dues provide 45.8 percent of a club's income, followed by food, 27.4 percent;

sports activities, 12.9 percent; beverages, 9.1 percent; and all other, 4.8 percent.

Regular memberships rose 2.9 percent in 1991, while other classes of memberships fell 2.6 percent.

Geographically, the South led the way with a 3.6-percent membership jump. Far West memberships increased 0.8 percent and East 0.7 percent. The Midwest suffered a 4.7 percent loss.

"Membership is down in the Midwest because of the recession," Fearis said. "Heavy industrial cities like Detroit, Chicago and St. Louis seem to have been harder hit than the technological and service areas on the coasts. In Kansas City, we've had a lot of high-volume clubs open recently. It's going to be interesting to see how they do."