

NEWS IN BRIEF

COVENTRY, Conn. — The Town Council is interested in a plan that would place a \$400-a-day holistic health resort with 125 guest rooms, a heliport, and a golf course on John Bigley's property. The health center is expected to cost \$45 million. Town Council Chairman Richard Ashley said he would ask the Planning and Zoning Commission to "proceed with deliberate speed" in approving the preliminary plans for the resort.

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CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas — The company that agreed to manage the city's two municipal golf courses missed its third deadline for posting a performance bond and city officials have decided to look for another management firm. Phoenix Group Holdings Inc. did not produce a \$4.1 million bond, which would have covered construction costs for a third municipal golf course.

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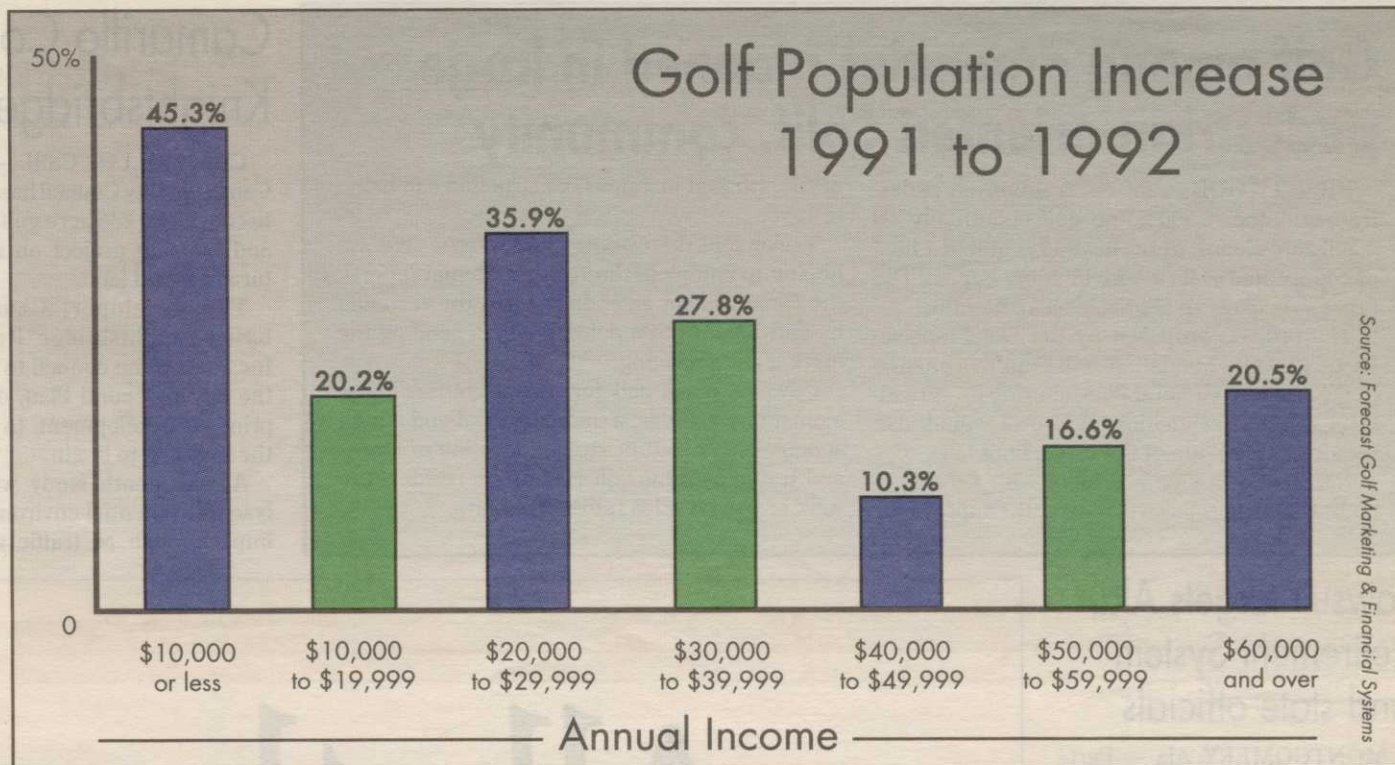
BELLEVILLE, Ill. — Construction of a \$6 million public golf course and 120-home residential development should begin in early summer. Investors hope nine of the 18 holes will be ready for play by summer 1994. The course will be known as The Golf Club at Dunnridge. Lohmann Golf Designs has been retained to design the course and Garard Golf Inc. will build it.

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DELAND, Fla. — A consultant has recommended the county build a low-cost, "executive-length" course atop the Plymouth Avenue Landfill. The National Golf Foundation report recommended a \$3 million, 18-hole course, lighted driving range and putting greens.

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KINGSPORT, Tenn. — Meadowview Golf Club hopes to begin construction of a new 18 holes later this spring. The club has offered Meadowview memberships to current members of its existing course in Kingsport and has recruited other golfers within the area.



Recession or no recession, player pool up 4.5 million

By HAL PHILLIPS

The latest numbers from Forecast Golf Marketing & Financial Systems Inc. indicate the golf industry has weathered the recent recession and, during 1992, augmented its player base by a hefty 4.5 million.

"The recession is over as far as the golf industry is concerned," said Forecast President Scott Marlowe. "The recession's greatest impact was on golfers with incomes between \$10,000 and \$40,000. However, these brackets rebounded in 1992 (see above chart).

"Golf participation among persons with household incomes of \$50,000 or more continued to increase from 1989 through 1992, despite the recession."

Forecast's 1992 figures show there are 24.5 million golfers in America, up from 20.1 million in 1991. Golfers now constitute 13.5 percent of the general population. Men account for approximately 16 million (up

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— Forecast's Scott Marlowe

1.2 million) and women number 8.6 million, an increase of 1.6 million (22 percent) over 1991.

In Forecast's book, a *golfer* is anyone who plays at least one 18-hole round of conventional golf per year. This excludes people who play only at ranges and alternative facilities, both of which grew at unprecedented rates during the recession, said Marlowe.

Via direct mail, Forecast randomly surveys 40,000 people each year—20,000 in the spring, 20,000 in the fall. The re-

sults are then tabulated and broken down in groups classified by sex, income, race and geography. It's a long process, evidenced by the fact that figures for 1992 are just now emerging.

"The numbers also indicate that golf is far more 'democratic' in its participation base than is the common perception—and as the Baby Boomers age, that will become even more true," said Marlowe, noting last year's 45.3-percent increase in golfers earning less than \$10,000 annually. Indeed, this group was the fastest growing in golf.

"The industry desperately needs more affordable golf courses to satisfy demand among the lower-income segment of the market," he continued. "Municipalities may be better equipped to provide golf services to lower-income golfers than the private sector, which has to contend with rising operating costs and profit incentive. Our demographic studies show that, from a market

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