

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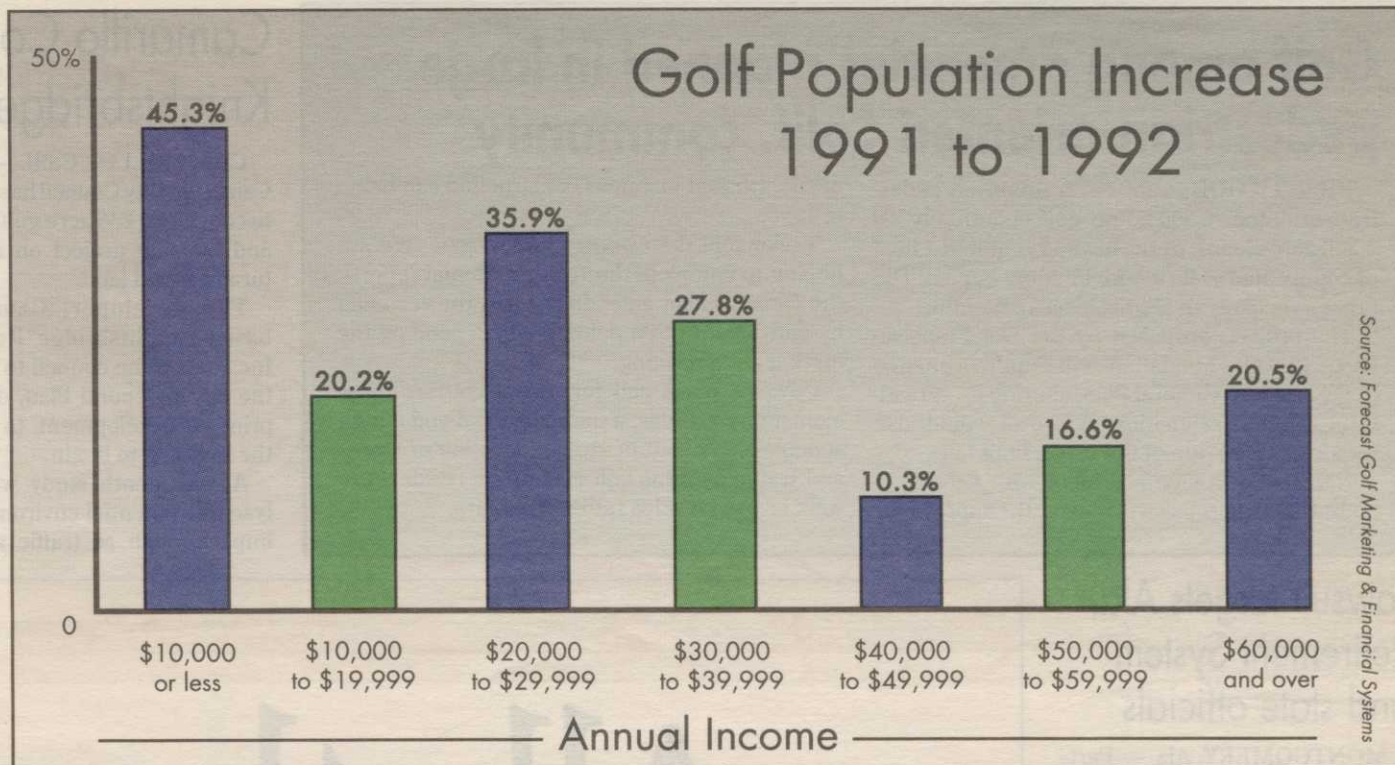
**BELLEVILLE, Ill.** — Construction of a \$6 million public golf course and 120-home residential development should begin in early summer. Investors hope nine of the 18 holes will be ready for play by summer 1994. The course will be known as The Golf Club at Dunnridge. Lohmann Golf Designs has been retained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

*'The industry desperately needs more affordable golf courses to satisfy demand among the lower-income segment of the market.'*

— 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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CIRCLE #127

### Leading states in golf courses under construction

(as of Dec. 31, 1992)

Illinois	42
Michigan	40
Florida	36
Pennsylvania	28
California	26
Ohio	26
Texas	24
North Carolina	23
Wisconsin	23
New York	23
Missouri	22
Minnesota	21
Alabama	21
Indiana	19
Georgia	18

### Leading states in golf course openings in 1992

(End-of-year figures)

Michigan	29
Florida	23
Indiana	16
Ohio	16
Illinois	15
Georgia	15
Kentucky	15
New York	14
Virginia	13
Alabama	12
Minnesota	12
Pennsylvania	12
California	11
Texas	11
Missouri	10

## Davis firm busy in Southeast

GAINESVILLE, Ga. — The golf course architectural firm of Arthur L. Davis, Inc. is working on several projects in various stages of planning and development in the Southeast.

Construction is virtually complete on a 20-hole addition at Fort Jackson (S.C.) Golf Club.

Meanwhile, Davis is in the bidding phase on 18-hole The Rome (Ga.) Golf Course, and

the design phase on a 10-hole addition to LaFayette (Ga.) Golf Club, the 27-hole Music City National Golf Club in Tennessee, and a renovation of Fort McPherson Golf Course in Atlanta, Ga.

According to Davis' office, financing is being sought for new 18-hole courses in Clover, S.C., and Woodfin, N.C. — called Old Mill Golf Club and Woodfin Golf Club, respectively.

## Forecast: Player pool up 4.5m

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segmentation perspective, municipal courses are not direct competitors to daily-fee operations."

Studies show that Americans reduce — not eliminate — their leisure activities during a recession. Bearing that in mind, Marlowe is less than enthusiastic about President Clinton's tax proposal and its

perceived effect on the golf industry.

"It will take away discretionary dollars, which fuel the industry," Marlowe said. "I think the Clinton plan has a lot of holes and I can't support it. I think it's going to hurt golf."

"I think the energy tax will be the single biggest culprit. And if you take away the entertainment deduction, it will really hurt."

## Year-End Development Totals



### NGF report:

## Course openings, construction peaking

JUPITER, Fla. — Fresh National Golf Foundation figures indicate that another year chock full of course openings lies ahead, followed by a period of uncertainty.

At the end of 1992, 509 courses were scheduled to open in 1993. Since experience shows that about 70 percent of the facilities scheduled to open in a given year actually do, about 350 tracks should open this year.

According to the NGF's annual report, Golf Facilities in the U.S., that would be close to the previous two years — 351 in 1991 and 354 in 1992. The 354 openings were the most in 22 years, according to the NGF.

The national supply of courses has grown by 1,284 since 1989 — the highest four-year total since 1970-73, when 1,344 came on line.

The NGF said that as of last Dec. 31, 622 courses were under construction. Another 580 were in planning — 100 fewer than a year before.

NGF Vice President of Research Mike Russell said uncertainty surrounding many of these projects makes projections into

1994 almost impossible.

Among the report's other findings:

- Real estate continues to fade as a driving force in course development. At the same time, public development is increasing enough to fill that void. In 1989, 50 percent of new courses were tied to real estate. Today, it's about 27 percent. In 1989, 66 percent of new courses were public. Today, the percentage is 81.

- More of today's development is occurring at existing facilities — an indication of construction to meet ongoing demand in their communities.

- The interest in par-3, executive and other non-traditional facilities remains steady but still relatively low, representing about 10 percent of new openings.

- While development is beginning to level off in Florida and other Sunbelt areas, the Midwest appears to be emerging as the new leader in construction activity.

The 12 states opening the most courses in 1992 included Michigan (1st), Indiana and Ohio (tied, 3rd), Illinois and Kentucky (tied, 5th), Alabama and Minnesota (tied, 10th).

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