

NEWS IN BRIEF

BRANSON, Mo. — LedgeStone will be the name of a 6,800-yard, 18-hole golf course to be developed here by the Arkansas firm of Cooper Communities Inc. The course will be the centerpiece of the proposed retirement and recreation community. First phase of the development will embrace 800 acres.

PIERCE TWP., Ohio — Great Traditions, the developer interested in building a golf course here, still is weighing its options. Meanwhile, Pierce Township trustees have met with a representative of the consulting firm they hired to evaluate the feasibility of building a golf course on the 500 acres that once was Warnerton Farm.

GRANTS, N.M. — While the soon-to-be-opened 18-hole golf course adjacent to the New Mexico Women's Correctional Facility was receiving generous water treatment, parched prisoners inside the facility went without shower or toilet water for two straight Sundays. City manager Willie Alire assured prison personnel it wouldn't happen again.

INDIAN WELLS, Calif. — Last November, the Indian Wells City Council approved plans for a 18-hole, 600-acre country club known as The Reserve at Hidden Valley. Now, three Indian Wells residents have complained to a Riverside grand jury that the city is wasting \$10 million in public redevelopment funds on a private country club. The 1992-93 grand jury ended its term June 30 without concluding its review of the complaint.

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — Cobblestone Golf Group has relocated its offices to Del Mar near San Diego. The new address and telephone number is 3702 Via De La Valle, Ste. 202, Del Mar, CA 92014; 619-794-2602.

Long-delayed Colorado resort takes giant step

Special permit for use of national-forest land granted after 20 years

By PETER BLAIS

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, Colo. — A massive golf/ski resort that has been on the drawing board for 20 years is about to become reality.

Developers this summer obtained a 40-year special-use permit from the National Forest Service to develop \$70 million Lake Catamount resort. Approximately half the complex will be on Routt National Forest land.

The federal permit was the last major roadblock in the way of the 7,000-plus acre project, which will eventually include two 18-hole courses, lift capacity to serve 10,000 skiers daily, 3,800 dwelling units, 1,000 hotel rooms and 250,000 square feet of commercial space.

All that remains is developing a master plan and securing financing, a process that should take about 18 months, said Richard Browne, spokesman for the developers.

"We could break ground as early as spring 1995," he predicted.

To survive, a Rocky Mountain resort must be a four-season affair, Browne said. The five-month golf season is too short for a new resort to survive without skiing. Likewise, the ski numbers don't work unless complemented by golf, he added.

"To survive today, you've got to have both," Browne said.

Developers will build roads and utilities the first year, Browne speculated. Course construction will probably start a year later.

"A golf course takes at least two years to build because of the short growing season up there," Browne said from his Houston office. "That means the courses would probably be ready for play by late 1998 or early 1999."

That may seem a ways off to most, but not to Browne, who has followed this project since it was first conceived back in the



An artist's view of the Catamount resort, upon completion. Ground should break in 1995.

We wanted to use less than one-tenth of 1 percent of Routt National Forest. We thought the animals should be willing to share a little corner of that property.'

— Richard Browne, developers' spokesman

early 1970s. That's when a pair of local Steamboat Springs developers dammed up a portion of the Yampa River and formed Lake Catamount.

The developers proposed a major ski resort that would draw water from the lake for use on nearby slopes. They envisioned hosting many skiing events if the Olympics came to Colorado.

The Olympics never came and the project languished in file drawers until the early 1980s when a group of former Steamboat ski resort owners and Mitchell Energy Co. of Houston formed a joint venture partner-

ship to revive the proposal.

They eventually convinced the federal government to designate 4,000 acres of Routt National Forest as a recreational sports area. They coupled the federal land with 3,260 acres they already controlled in Rabbit Ears Pass.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the various local, state and federal agencies involved in the project required a total of 110 public hearings.

"Getting that final environmental statement accepted was a laborious task," Browne recalled. "It brought out every environmental group. They all claimed we'd be messing up the environment."

"A lot of them felt strongly that people just don't belong in the mountains, only animals do. We wanted to use less than one-tenth of 1 percent of Routt National Forest. We thought the animals should be willing to share a little corner of that property. They'd still have better than 99.9 percent of it."

Convincing environmentalists and government regulators that wildlife should move over, even if ever so slightly, didn't

Continued on page 26

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