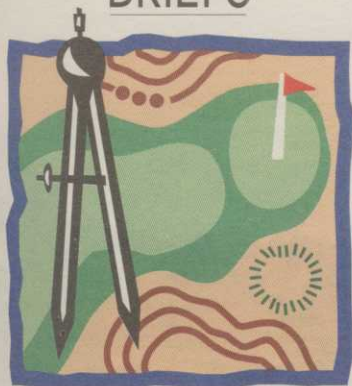


BRIEFS



NGF PROMOTES FRANK

JUPITER, Fla. — Barry S. Frank, 36, has been named manager of NGF Consulting Inc., a subsidiary of the National Golf Foundation specializing in feasibility and operational studies for planned and existing golf facilities. Frank will direct five other consultants for NGF Consulting, which also offers acquisition/due diligence studies for investors and lending institutions.

DONALD ROSS TREE DEDICATED

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — Oak Hill Country Club, site of the 1996 Ryder Cup, has dedicated a tree on its Hill of Fame to honor famed golf course architect Donald Ross. The Hill of Fame, located on the 13th hole, memorializes golf legends by dedicating trees in their honor. Ross designed more than 400 golf courses during his career, including Oak Hill, Pinehurst and Inverness. Mrs. Dale Shapiro, a granddaughter of Ross, attended the ceremony.

HARBOTTLE BREAKS GROUND

STEVINSON, Calif. — Ground has been broken here on the Stevinson Ranch Savannah Course. The 7,000-yard daily-fee track, designed by John Harbottle and George Kelley, is the first 18 holes of a planned 36-hole project by The Lurie Company and GHK Development. Construction is scheduled to be completed by the summer of 1995.



John Harbottle

ST. LOUIS ADDS COMMUNITY

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — Conrad Properties Co. has teamed with three The Jones Co., Meyer Homes and McKelvey Homes to develop St. Louis's newest golf community. The proposed 390-acre site will have 560 homes and an 18-hole golf course with a learning center. The course will be an upscale daily-fee facility. The project is estimated at \$4.5 million. John C. Allen has designed the course. Construction of the clubhouse began in November, with completion expected in time for a course opening in April or May.

CYPRESS LAKES OPENS EXECUTIVE

LAKE LAND, Fla. — Cypress Lakes, named the number one community in the U.S. by the Manufactured Housing Congress, has completed and opened its new executive golf course. The 3,680-yard course, designed by Chip Powell of Powell Golf Design, winds through and around numerous cypress hammocks.

Mississippi's coast eyed by developers

By PETER BLAIS

GULFPORT, Miss. — Local officials expect a developer to announce plans this month to build one or two golf courses along the Mississippi coast, a move that will help diversify the area's casino gaming-dominated economy.

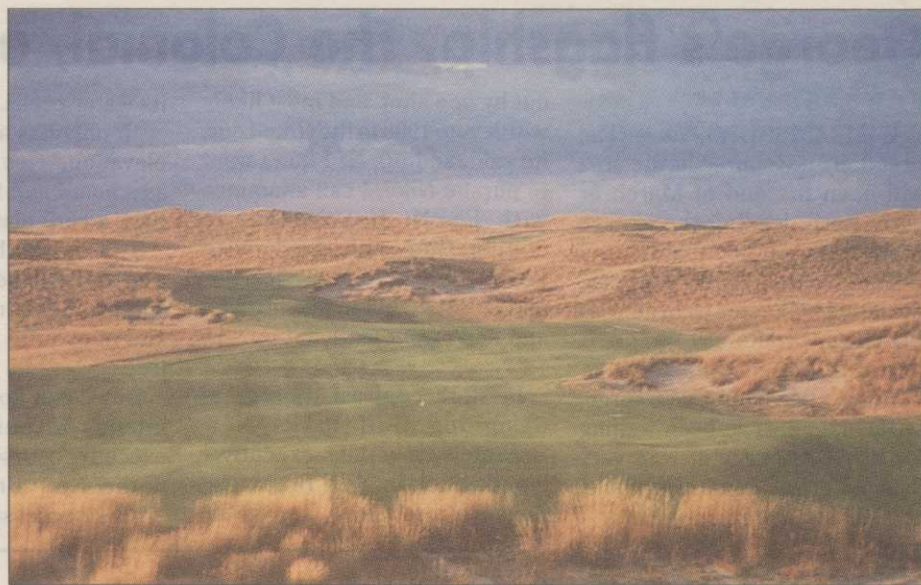
"We've had three groups looking at the marketplace so far and expect three more this month," consultant Donald Wizeman said in early December.

"One group wanted to buy an existing facility and a second was still looking for financing. The third group proposed taking two of the six primary sites we want to develop and would like right of first refusal on the other four. We're negotiating right now and I expect something to be signed by the end of January."

Harrison County Development Commission Executive Director Michael Olivier said: "We're looking at \$4 million to \$5 million signature courses. We need some good tracks for the area to emerge as a major golf destination. We hope to have five or six projects get underway this year and be on line sometime in 1996."

As reported in the August issue of *Golf Course News*, the Harrison

Continued on page 41



EARLY FAVORITES?

Golfers everywhere are already talking about where these two golf courses will be rated in the 1995 polls. Owners of Sand Hills in Nebraska, top, and the Links of North Dakota will have to wait to see. Ben Crenshaw and Bill Coore designed the Nebraska track out of that property's sand hills, while Stephen Kay tooled the North Dakota 18 out of the Badlands. For more on *The Ratings Game*, see p. 44-46.

Florida Cabinet nixes Ross course in favor of park

By MARK LESLIE

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Jacksonville citizens, city councilors, state legislators and golfers lost a major vote by a "lame-duck" state Cabinet, which unanimously voted to retain Ft. George Island exclusively as a state park.

Jacksonville area citizens, who overwhelmingly support reclaiming Ft.

George Island Golf Club, now must hope the new Cabinet will listen to them.

Gov. Lawton Chiles and the Cabinet voted unanimously on Dec. 13 to keep the golf course closed, retaining the entire 500-acre island as a state park. The Jacksonville City Council had set aside \$2 million to refurbish the Donald Ross-designed golf course, and support was

strong from citizens who pointed out that merely 67 acres would be maintained.

But after 20 minutes of speeches from both sides, including opponents Friends of Fort George Island and the Florida Audubon Society, the governor and Cabinet voted without debate.

"I'm still in shock," said proponent John

Continued on page 38

Jack Kidwell: 'Retire' not in his vocabulary

QA

Scratch golfer, Class A golf professional, golf course superintendent and award-winning designer, Jack Kidwell has been one of the most prominent, knowledgeable and respected men in Ohio golf for the past six decades. Kidwell, now in his mid-'70s and living in Columbus, is a former member of the PGA, a past president and lifetime fellow of both the American Society of Golf Course Architects and Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. He started caddying at age 7, worked on a grounds crew at 16, bought the nine-hole Beacon Light Golf Course with his father and ran it at 19, and, in 1958, designed his first 18-hole course at 39. Since then he's designed or renovated more than 100 courses. His design practice has since been bought out by protégé Dr. Michael Hurdzan, but he remains active.



Jack Kidwell

Golf Course News: Did your early experiences with golf, i.e. as a caddie in the 1920s) shape your ideas about golf and golf course design?

Jack Kidwell: I'm from a different age than golf today... The changes in golf have been so dramatic I think sometimes I've

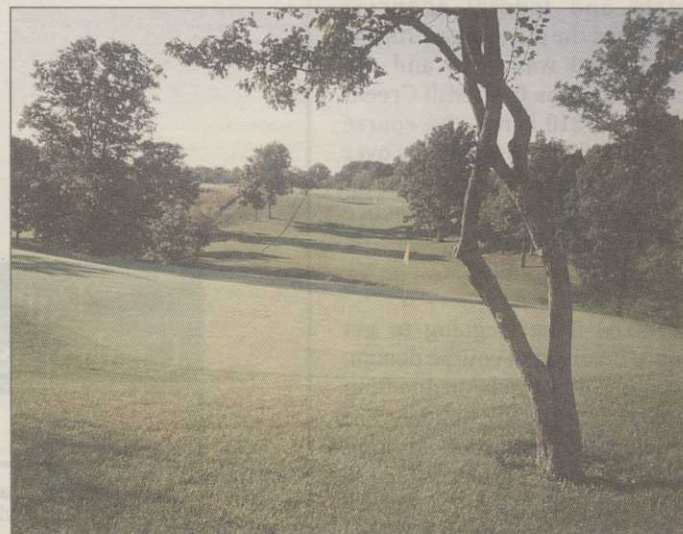


Photo by Brian Morgan

A Jack Kidwell creation — Hickory Hills in Columbus, Ohio.

been left behind. I've done a lot of work that's been well accepted but I do find it hard to think of spending \$8, \$10, \$20 million to build a golf course. All I remember about my caddy days was that it was hotter than blue blazes and I was tired. I do think I did learn a lot about human character. A lot of fellas that play golf show what they're made of when they're playing.

GCN: When did you start playing golf?

Continued on page 40

Mississippi coast potential to be tapped by casino-golf developers

Continued from page 35

County development and tourism commissions last summer hired Wizeman's Myrtle Beach, S.C.-based company, International Resort & Golf Resources, to market the area — dubbed the Mississippi Golf Coast — to potential course developers.

Wizeman's main duties, Olivier said, were to identify specific sites that landowners would be willing to donate to golf course developers and to attract developers interested in building courses that would make the area a premier golf destination.

Wizeman developed a manual providing an overview of the Gulfport market, the casino gaming industry, the existing golf course supply and information on available sites. He then sent the report to a select list of 35 prospects. Among other things, the report notes that:

- Approximately 300,000 people reside within a 30-mile radius of Harrison County. Most live near the 26-mile stretch of man-made beachfront bordering the municipalities of Biloxi, Gulfport, Long Beach, Pass Christian and D'Iberville.

- The area is accessible from Interstate 10, which traverses Harrison County. The area also boasts the Gulfport/Biloxi International Airport, a multi-million-dollar facility serviced by four major regional and national carriers.

- Fourteen casinos have opened with another 17 projects pending. The first opened in 1992. Existing facilities generate almost \$1.5 billion in annual revenue and host 60,000 guests daily. Another 6,030 hotel rooms are expected to open in 1994-95, bringing the total room count to about 10,000.

- The Mississippi Golf Coast has 16 existing courses, including Broadwater Beach Sea Course (the state's oldest layout) and Mark McCumber-designed Windance Country Club (site of the Nike Tour's Mississippi Gulf Coast Classic).

"Other areas may have casinos, golf courses or beaches, but few have quality sites for all three," the Mississippi Golf Coast manual boasts.

And few are likely to get all three in the near future, added Wizeman, noting the fall elections in states where gambling was under consideration. Voters in Texas and Alabama turned out gubernatorial candidates favoring gambling while Arkansans and Floridians turned aside referendums aimed at establishing casino operations.

"I think some potential developers were holding back until the elections," Olivier said. "The November results helped

us greatly. There won't be the proliferation of gaming there could have been. Florida, Alabama and Texas are major markets for us."

"We realized we could use gaming as a way to attract other recreational activities. We get 60,000 people a day through the casinos who want to do other things while they are here."

The Mississippi Golf Coast manual also contains architectural drawings and aerial

photographs of the six primary sites.

The landowners have agreed to donate 150 acres to golf course developers. The landowners would make their money by developing surrounding acreage.

The only land cost for potential developers would be a 5-percent broker's commission [which averages about \$20,000] on the land's appraised value.

Twenty-five sites have been

identified for potential development, Olivier said. The six appearing in the manual have the fewest environmental obstacles and are located in optimum locations for the casino hotels that would funnel much of the business to the new layouts.

"We've met with Department of Environmental Quality staffers and reviewed the sites with them," the development agency official said. "Developers

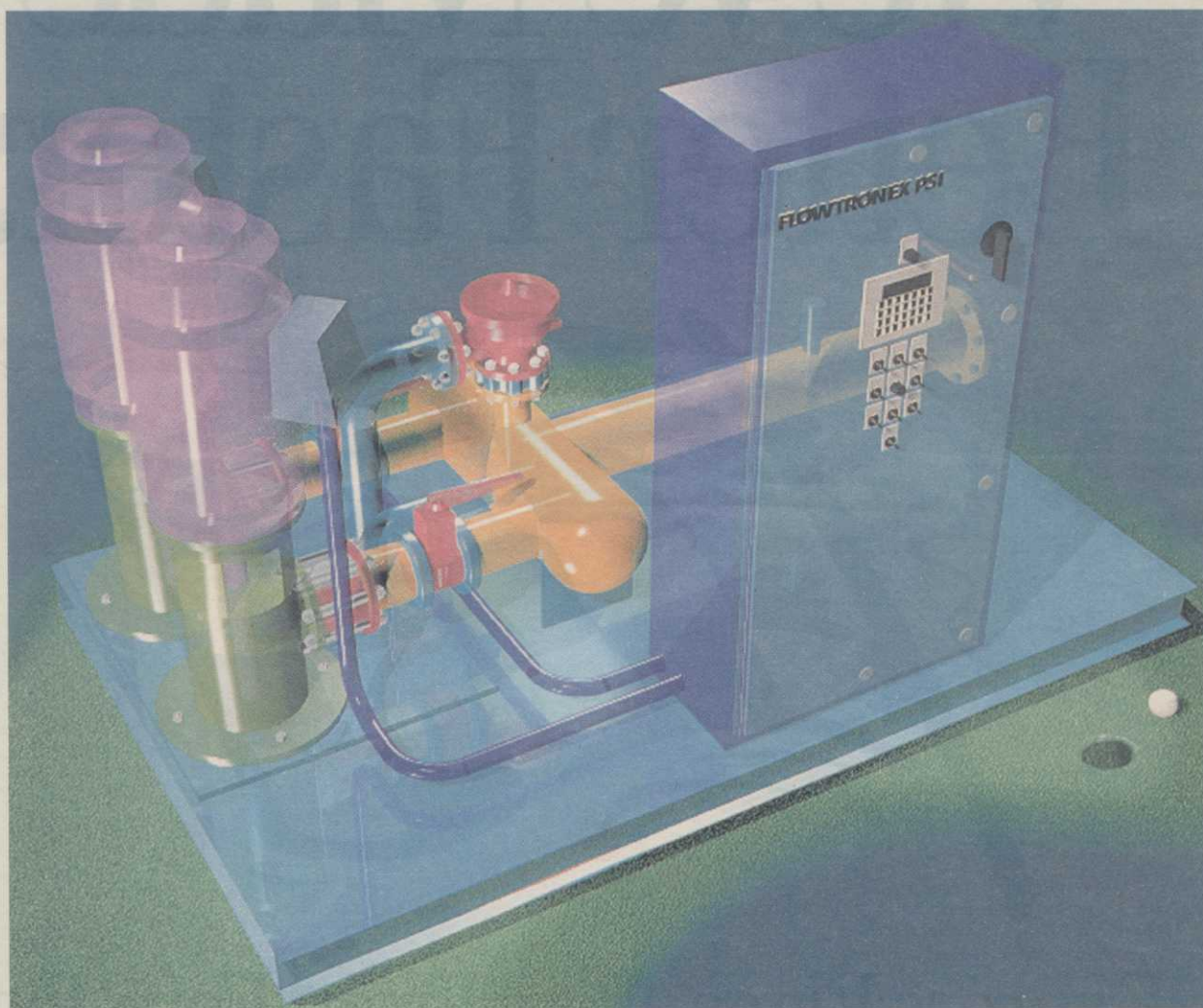
will still need to go through permitting, but we'll assist in the process.

"We're trying to be pro-active on this."

The state and county, Olivier added, are offering various incentives such as property tax exemptions, sales tax exemptions on course construction materials and corporate income tax discounts for facilities employing more than 20 people.

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