

BRIEFS



COBBLESTONE BUYS HILLS AT LAKEWAY

AUSTIN, Texas — Cobblestone Golf Group has acquired the Hills at Lakeway from The Hillwood Co., a real estate development firm operated by Ross Perot Jr. The complex includes three golf courses, The Academy of Golf and The World of Tennis. The Hills at Lakeway represents Cobblestone's largest single acquisition. Del Mar, Calif.-based Cobblestone operates 19 courses throughout the country.

MARTY INVADERS ATLANTA

ATLANTA — Martty Golf Management has signed a management consulting agreement to oversee construction, marketing and grand opening phases of The Heritage Club for developer Maurice Whyte. Construction has begun and plans are for the Mike Young-designed, 18-hole course to open in November, said President Thomas Martty.



Thomas Martty

LA EXTENDS GOLFCORP LEASE

DIAMOND BAR, Calif. — Los Angeles County has agreed to a 15-year extension of GolfCorp's management agreement at Diamond Bar Golf Course. The Club Corporation International subsidiary has operated the county-owned, 18-hole, daily-fee facility since 1987. More than \$1.4 million in course improvements are underway, including a renovated driving range and new irrigation system.

AGCC SIGNS ON IN SACRAMENTO

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — American Golf Country Clubs (a division of American Golf Corp.) has received a long-term operating lease for Oaks Golf & Country Club in Nicolaus, located approximately 20 minutes from Sacramento. The private, 18-hole layout is tentatively scheduled to open early next year.

NAG NAMES RIPPEY PRESIDENT

LOMBARD, Ill. — Michael Rippey has been named president of North American Golf, the full-service course development and management company based here. Rippey takes over the position previously held by George Rourke, who will remain as principal stockholder and director. NAG manages seven courses, primarily in the Midwest.



Mike Rippey

MARKETING IDEA OF THE MONTH

The incentive is profits in the incentive business

By PETER BLAIS

Rewarding productive employees with travel vacations has been one of the most successful methods for corporations to keep their best workers.

Warmer locales such as Florida, Southern California, Hawaii and the Caribbean have been the traditional destinations to which companies have sent their best sales people, department heads who come in under budget or supervisors with strong safety records.

Increasingly, golf courses, particularly in Northern areas, are beginning to see corporate incentive travel as a way to fill rounds at their facilities and are tapping into the lucrative \$5.2 billion market (Society of Incentive Travel Executives figure).

"Corporate incentive packages make up 15 to 20 percent of our rounds," said Shanty Creek (Mich.) Director of Marketing Barry Godwin.

The incentive travel business at the Bellaire, Mich., complex has been growing steadily in recent years, Godwin said. Attracted by the nationally ranked Legend Course as well as the Northern Michigan resort's other three layouts, corporations are increas-



Shanty Creek Golf Course has successfully catered to the corporate incentive travel market.

ingly looking at the area's golf packages as a way to reward their best employees.

Incentive groups average about 50 people with average stays of two nights/three days, Godwin reported.

Incentive packages are typically discounted an average of 15 to 20 percent below the normal rate.

Some can be scheduled into slower times of the year, although most

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Official says clubs take insufficient time selecting course superintendent

By PETER BLAIS

SAN FRANCISCO — The superintendent is in charge of the primary asset at many clubs. And yet, few clubs take sufficient care in selecting the most important individual on the payroll, according to Reed Mackenzie, past president of Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska, Minn.

"The most important thing a club can do is analyze its own situation and decide what it wants from its superintendent," said Mackenzie, who has been part of the Hazeltine search committee for two superintendents, Chris Hague and his successor, Patty Knaggs.

No books or pamphlets were available to instruct the Hazeltine greens committee how to begin the search process when its superintendent abruptly quit back in 1982 just prior to the U.S. Senior Open.

The club was fortunate to land Hague,

Mackenzie said. The committee refined its technique and was better prepared when it hired Knaggs three years ago, he added.

While there is no standard operating procedure for hiring a course manager, Mackenzie recounted Hazeltine's guidelines during the International Conference and Show.

- Appoint a chairman of the search committee. The green chairman is often the person selected. The most important thing, however, is that it be someone with sufficient time to devote to the search.

- Establish a selection committee of three to six people. Members should be familiar with golf, club facilities, budgetary process and superintendent responsibilities. A woman and a financial expert should be part of the committee. Members should have eight to 10 weeks to devote to the search.

- Develop a detailed job description. This allows the committee to focus on its



Patty Knaggs

needs and applicants to know what will be expected. The GCSAA, association chapters, U.S. Golf Association and other clubs can help formulate a job description.

- In addition to lines of authority, salary and budget size, other items on the job description might include club expectations regarding the superintendent's participation in professional associations, educating interns, dealing with local government boards and enrolling in classes.

- Establish a compensation package that

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Nation's first public course marks centennial

NEW YORK CITY — Van Cortlandt Golf Course in the Bronx, the first public course to be built in the United States, will commemorate its 100th birthday with a week-long celebration beginning July 3.

American Golf Corp. (AGC) has operated the course for the city since 1992. "American Golf is proud to play a part in the recent history of this stately public course, which has served as both an invaluable recreational asset to the city of New York and a pioneering force in public golf course development for an unprecedented 100 years," said AGC President of Golf

Operations Kevin Roberts.

Van Cortlandt was originally designed as a nine-hole layout by T. McLure Peters at a cost of \$625 and opened in July 1895. Four years later, Thomas Bendelow remodeled the course and added the second nine holes. Bendelow later became general manager at Cortlandt and instituted the first-ever system of reserving tee times during peak periods.

The clubhouse, built in 1902, is still used. In fact the locker room, complete with wooden lockers, was featured in a scene from the movie "Wall Street" starring Michael Douglas.

Jones elected pres. of Nat'l Club Assn.

WASHINGTON — Hugh Jones was elected president of the National Club Association during the organization's recent annual meeting in Charleston, S.C.

Jones was partner-in-charge of the audit department in the Orlando office of KPMG Peat Marwick until retiring in 1991. He is a consultant to agribusinesses and not-for-profit organizations and a member and past president of the Country Club of Orlando.

A National Club Association member since 1990, Jones had previously served as treasurer. He succeeds James Maser, vice chairman of the board of ClubCorp International, as the association's president.

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Golf Links to manage Tenn. layout

MANCHESTER, Tenn. — Willowbrook Golf Club, a new 18-hole public golf course here, has chosen Golf Links Inc. of Hermitage as its management company. Golf Links President Jerry Lemons, who also designed Willowbrook's 7,021-yard layout, said his company will provide daily operation management of the entire project, golf shop operations, food service and course management.

The course is scheduled to open in the fall. It features bentgrass greens, Bermuda-grass fairways and roughs, and zoysiagrass approaches and collars. Tall fescue outlines the out-of-play areas that will be used to enhance wildlife.

Lemons said green fees will be comparable to state parks golf courses, which are around \$26 to \$30 with cart for 18 holes.

Incentive travel

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corporations prefer to come during the heart of the golf season, Godwin said.

Cape Cod (Mass.) courses are starting to see the benefits of tapping the incentive travel market, according to Tom Martin, director of Cape Cod Golf Holiday, a holiday travel firm.

"Corporations are surprised to discover we have 31 public courses in a 70-mile stretch of land," Martin said. "Say a corporation wanted to reward

four executives for successfully completing a major project. We could put them in a centrally located hotel and get them on four different top-quality golf courses. I expect that part of the Cape's business to really grow."

Golf can also be a major component in attracting corporate meetings. "You can only keep executives in a board room for so long," said Taren Grom, an editor with *Corporate and Incentive Travel Magazine*. "Golf is a great amenity and will attract corporate meeting planners. But the course, rooms,

food and other amenities all have to be of corporate incentive travel quality."

The downsizing of companies and budgets in the wake of recent lean economic times has presented some opportunities for Northern golf resorts that can cater to regional conference and incentive travel customers.

"It's much more cost effective for, say, a Chicago company to hold its corporate meeting or send its best salespeople to a Michigan resort rather than Florida, Hawaii or the Caribbean," Grom said. "Companies have cut back on travel and are looking at more regional meetings and incentive packages. Northern golf resorts are in a good position to go after them."

Sugarloaf Golf Club in Kingfield, Maine, is becoming increasingly involved in the regional market and targets Maine companies.

"Some stay at the hotel, but most of our incentive players come up for the day," said Sugarloaf Conference Sales Manager Scott Wentzel. "The company will typically spend \$75 on green fees and a cart plus another \$50 or more in the clubhouse. We get a lot of foursomes and occasionally groups of 15, 20 or more."

Travel agencies specializing in corporate and golf travel typically book incentive and meeting arrangements for their clients. Moritz Travel of St. Louis, for instance, reportedly books \$200 million of incentive travel annually.

"One way to get involved in the incentive travel market is to contact some of the larger incentive and golf travel agencies," said William Hogan, managing director of Wide World of Golf, a golf travel firm based in Carmel, Calif. "Put together a packet of information and send it out."

Grom had several additional suggestions:

- Go to the local convention and visitors bureau and get a feel for the type of companies that have expressed interest in that area.
- Contact the two best-known corporate travel associations — Meeting Planners International (214-712-7700) and the Society of Incentive Travel Executives (212-575-0910) — for information or to purchase mailing lists.
- Send press releases and consider advertising in corporate travel publications.
- Put together a public relations and marketing package stressing golf packages.

"With tight budgets, corporate travel planners are looking for extras when deciding between destinations," Grom said. "Consider something like a free cocktail party or golf tournament for anyone booking at least 50 rooms. The cost is minimal and it might mean the difference in being selected."



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