Public-access supply meeting demand in Ocean City, Md.

By ROTA KNOTT

OCEAN CITY, Md. - With eight public-access golf courses in the works, including four within planned communities and two more 18-hole additions at existing clubs, this region on Maryland's Eastern Shore has invested heavily in the golf destination business.

Eight courses are already flourishing in and around the resort town. First to join them will likely be the new 18 at The Beach Club, which was originally planned as a 36-hole facility. Hunt Crosby, a spokesman for facility, said it's not only feasible but necessary to proceed with the additional 18 holes, which should be ready for play by July 1996.

"We anticipate the growth of golf lo-

cally to continue," Crosby said. "There has been substantial growth already. The number of rounds of golf played here increases by 20 percent each year."

Ed Lorenz, head pro at the 18-hole Bay Club Golf Course, said his course is planning an expansion to meet demand. The Bay Club remains in the permitting process for construction of another 18. Lorenz said the club hopes to have the new course up and running by the spring of 1997.

"Depending on who you listen to, there is a tremendous need for tee times," he said. "Our predictions as to when to go forward are linked to the profit of the golf course. And now looks like the time to move."

Andy Loving, PGA professional at Ocean City's municipal course, Eagle's Landing, said business has picked up steadily since it opened in 1991. It currently operates at near full capacity. "I really think building new courses will be good overall," said Loving. "People are coming. They know about Ocean City; they just can't get on the courses much of the time.'

The 36-hole Ocean City Golf and Yacht Club, the resort's first golf course, is making some minor improvements to keep pace. River Run, a golf community located just outside the resort, recently completed improvements to its track, including rebuilding three greens.

The area's other established golf course community, Ocean Pines, has tentatively planned a second set of championship links, pending a referendum vote. If approved in the referendum, work on the new Ocean Pines course could start by this fall.

Three new golf communities — Lighthouse Sound, Riddle Farm and Woodcock Farm - are in various stages of the planning process. Riddle Farm will boast two separate 18-hole courses, one public and one semi-private, covering approximately 380 acres. Plans for Woodcock Farm include an 18-hole golf course, also. Dual proposals, one containing 18 holes of golf and the other calling for 27 holes, have been approved for Lighthouse Sound. The property owners have not yet made a decision as to which plan to pursue.



The double-greened 9th and 18th at The Bay Club, a Russell Roberts design in nearby Berlin, Md.

Course cooperative, Golf Getaway, has promoted tourism and continued growth

By ROTA KNOTT

OCEAN CITY, Md. - Growing golf on Maryland's Eastern Shore hasn't been an easy task, but the hard work of promoting this area as a golfing destination is finally paying off.

Plans are currently in the works for eight new golf courses, seven championship and one executive, all of which may come on-line over the next two or three years. In addition, both major and minor improvements are underway at several of the eight existing

Those involved in the golf industry are confident the area can handle all the proposed activity. Indeed, some feel the area may require even more courses to keep up with the demand for tee times.

Sandi Smith is manager of Ocean City's Golf Getaway, an organization established in 1991 through a cooperative effort of the five courses in existence at that time to promote golf in the area. She said the game has been on a continuous upswing locally.

"Growing golf is very exciting. There is a definite need for new courses," Smith said. "A demand has been created by the sheer number of golfers who come here to play now instead of going elsewhere.

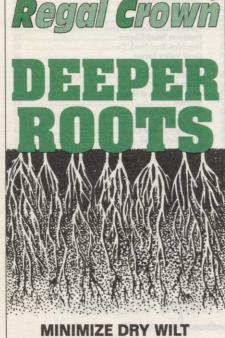
Smith said the goal of Golf Getaway, which is expanding its membership to include new courses as they open, is to band golf courses with the local community to promote Ocean City as a golf destination.

The organization is funded and governed by its membership, which includes all the existing courses in the vicinity of Ocean City as well as several within a 30-mile radius of the re-

Golf Getaway, in conjunction with the town itself, promotes the resort golf facilities nationwide through advertising, utilizing both the print media and television sources, press releases and sponsoring local golf tournaments.

Alex FauntLeRoy, executive direc-

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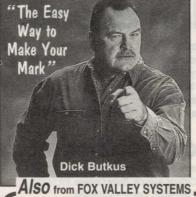
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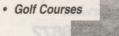
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