

Raven creates desert prototype

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we welcomed the cooperation with the county to draw up a plan for preserving the beauty and natural health of this area."

"Everyone out here has a sincere respect for the desert, and none of us wants to see it damaged," said project horticulturist Bruce Hart. "I think that through our efforts here, we can set a precedent for how other developments in the area treat the land."

The Raven is a 6,900-yard, par-

71 Robert Trent Jones Jr.-designed track that will serve as the centerpiece of a new 410-acre master-planned community. It is nestled on the outskirts of Tucson between the open expanse of southern Arizona's Coronado National Forest and the foothills of the Santa Catalina Mountains. Though the area appears rugged enough to take nearly anything a developer could dish out, the ecosystem it supports is among the most fragile on earth.

Because of this, Raven Golf chose to work closely with the Pima County Board of Supervi-

sors and local environmentalists to draft an extensive desert preservation plan before the final spade of earth was turned.

The final plan called for hiring a horticulturist and two biologists to oversee every aspect of the development process and ensure that construction of the golf course disturbed the natural environment as little as possible.

Hart owns BK Cacti, a company that specializes in transplanting the fragile giant saguaros and other sensitive desert vegetation.

The preservation plan agreed to by Pima County and The Raven

calls for at least 50 percent of the stately giant saguaros on the property to be preserved and used throughout the development. However, Hart and Tucson-based D&T Cactus Salvage Co. have gone well beyond that, salvaging as much as 85 percent of the cacti.

To date, they have preserved 8,000 to 10,000 mature saguaros (many of them hundreds of years old) as well as thousands of native trees, smaller cacti and other plants.

At one time, the six-acre nursery The Raven constructed to house the plants until they could

all be transplanted boasted the largest concentration of saguaros in the world — about 2,500 specimens.

The use of so many salvaged plants has made the clearing and grading of The Raven Golf Club more expensive than similar developments, but Adelson sees it as an overall plus for the club.

"Sure it costs more, but it's going to make a huge difference in the quality of the golf experience and in how the golf course relates to its environment," said Adelson. "These mature saguaros and other plants are going to lend beauty to the course that cannot be duplicated by man. And, by keeping the land in its natural state as much as possible, we can keep the surrounding desert healthy. How can you put a price tag on that?"

While Hart and his staff take care of the plant life, The Raven's development is being monitored by two independent biologists from Tucson-based Harris Environmental Group who watch out for the native animals.

Not only do these two conduct studies to ensure that the development won't negatively impact the local wildlife, but, many times, they even walk in front of the bulldozers to scare rabbits and other critters out of the way.

And, if they find one that's sick or hurt, the biologists cooperate with the Arizona Game and Fish Department to nurse the animal back to health and find it a suitable new home.

According to Lisa Harris, founder of Harris Environmental Group, this is the first project she is aware of that has had biologists follow through with all phases of development.

"I feel Raven Golf has tried very hard to live up to the regulations," said Harris. "I think they are doing a very good job. The whole project has been wonderful — not just the cactus but looking out for the animals too."

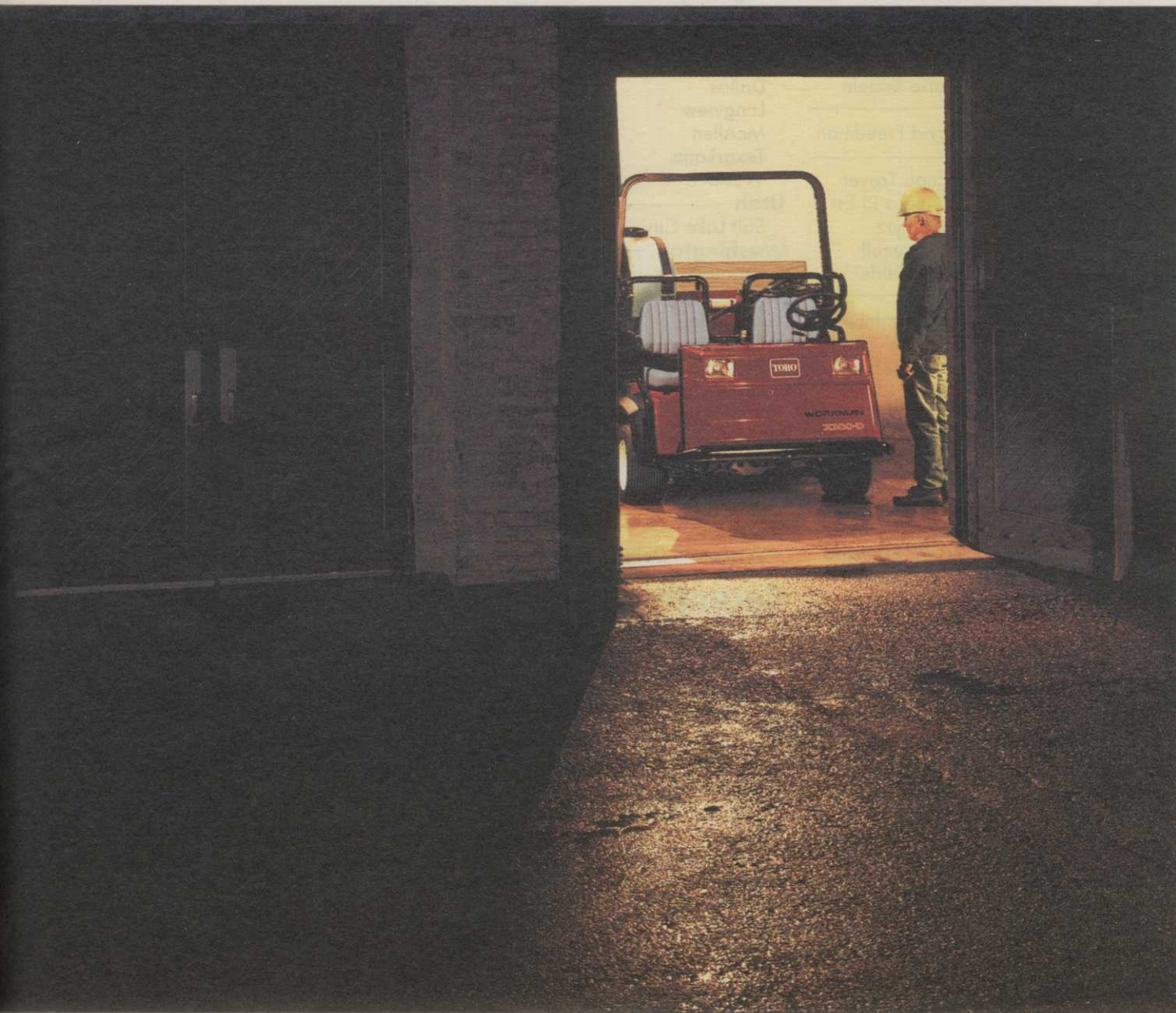
In all, this project has been called one of the largest desert-preservation efforts ever undertaken.

RBI forms golf division

LITTLETON, Colo. — RBI Golf, a new subsidiary of Littleton contracting firm Randall & Blake, Inc. (RBI), is set to do more than \$15 million in its first year, with five golf courses already in the works.

RBI has been involved in construction of more than 40 golf courses in its 20 years. RBI created RBI Golf the first of October after completing more than 25 golf course projects over the last five years, including Casper (Wyo.) Municipal, Kennedy Golf Course in Denver and Logan (Utah) Municipal Golf Course.

On several of the courses charted for completion in 1996 RBI Golf is an equity partner as well as general contractor.



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