



Drought pushes New Mexico superintendents to limit

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — It's not easy being a course superintendent in Albuquerque this year.

Thanks to relentless sun and wind and far-below average rainfall, course superintendents at the city's heavily-trafficked four municipal courses are being pushed to the wall this summer to keep their tees, fairways and greens presentable and playable.

According to the National Weather Service, rainfall during the past 18 months in the Albuquerque area was 5.58 inches

below average as of late June and 2.38 inches below average since Jan. 1. A measly .52 inches of rain had fallen this year by late June. Fortunately, nearly two inches of rain fell during the first two weeks of July to ease some of the pressure.

To try to cope with the drought, the city's Golf Management Division has taken drastic steps. The first is the use of computer-aided weather stations at all four of the city's four public courses to make watering as ef-

ficient as possible. The stations take atmospheric readings based on wind, temperature, relative humidity and other factors. That information is then combined with soil samples to try to determine the exact amount of water the course needs. The computer then runs the sprinklers.

The second step was a retrofit of poorly-designed sprinkler systems and even removing certain areas of turf at all four courses that are not normally in play. About six acres of turf have al-

ready been removed at each course — Arroyo del Oso, Los Altos, Puerto del Sol and Ladera.

Glen Coontz, assistant director of Parks and General Services for Albuquerque, has called the situation a very delicate condition.

Albuquerque's four municipal courses receive about 455,000 rounds a year. The challenge of keeping them watered properly has been magnified in recent years because the city's underground aquifer has been found to be much less vast than once thought.

City, builder part company on California course plan

BARSTOW, Calif. — City officials recently broke off negotiations with Pegasus Management Company to build the proposed 18-hole Barstow Players Express Golf Club, saying the company's references didn't check out and its financial demands were unacceptable, according to the *Barstow Desert Dispatch*.

Pegasus had claimed to have a team of well-known designers and builders who would build the proposed course on city-owned alfalfa fields near Interstate 15. The company also said it would demand no financial assistance or guarantees from the city.

Based on those claims, the city entered an exclusive negotiating agreement with Pegasus in February. But this spring, Pegasus began to demand certain financial conditions, according to city attorney Henry Kraft. On top of that, the city found that Pegasus could not back up its claims about designing and building.

Earlier in the year, Pegasus senior partner Gary Korpa told the *Barstow Desert Dispatch* that its engineers were heavyweights who had designed The Quarry in LaQuinta, Pelican Hill in Newport Beach and Jess Ranch in Apple Valley.

The city hired a private investigator to check out the claims and found they could not be substantiated.

Barstow officials are now back to square one in their six-year search to bring an 18-hole public course to Barstow. They recently started discussions again with Blue T golf, one of the original developers behind the course plans. Blue T is in the midst of preparing a new, complete proposal.

CORRECTION

Because of a typesetting error, two words were transposed in Charlie Barebo's letter to the editor ("A word about ozone") which appeared in the July issue of *Golf Course News*. The penultimate sentence in paragraph two should have read: "For every 3 feet the depth is decreased, transfers increase a corresponding 50 percent."

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SENSITIVE STROKES
Architect Ron Gart worked sensitively around wetlands of the newly opened Indian River Club. Located in Vero Beach, Fla., Indian River is only the third course in the world to be granted Audubon Signature status. The course also embodies the Environmental Principles for Golf Courses recently issued at the conference on Golf & The Environment (see page 16).

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on course costs

By MARK LESLIE

Worried the cost of golf is starting to drive people from the game, the incoming and outgoing presidents of the American Society of Golf Course Architects have presented arguments that would lead developers to make harsh choices about their projects.

Picking sides in a point-counterpoint atmosphere, Past President Jeff Brauer of Golfscapes in Houston and new President Denis Griffiths of Braselton, Ga., agreed construction costs have escalated too high but disagreed over the cure.

"Ten years ago there were few upscale daily-fee projects," Griffiths said. "Everyone today is doing

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