

Building survey

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The report divides the United States into four geographical zones. In each zone it states the minimum, median and maximum cost of 20 phases of construction — from layout and staking to erosion control, excavation, irrigation and drainage, shaping, cart paths and seeding. A narrative description accompanies each category.

A worksheet breaking down these costs is also provided for each region.

The diverse climatic zones of the country impact costs, GCBA Executive Director Phil Arnold points out in the document's foreword. "These conditions affect the length of the construction process, the grassing dates, and the complexity of certain elements such as irrigation and drainage," he said. "For instance, in areas of mild winters and well-drained soils, the construction schedule may be half of the time necessary for construction in sites with severe winters."

Beyond this, each site has its own characteristics affecting construction — from topography to vegetation, soils and governmental rules and regulations.

Whereas construction costs are site-specific, the GCBA document allows a developer "to look at the items and their description and apply the ranges [of cost] to the site," Sasser said. "Then they can come up with a rough estimate to start a financial analysis and decide whether the project makes sense. We also hope it helps architects for the same reason."

Generally, Zone 1 — roughly the Mid-Atlantic to the Northeast — is the most expensive region in which to build a golf course, while Zone 2, the South, is the least expensive. But the total construction cost is surprisingly close in all four zones. For instance, some items of construction may be lower in Zone 1 than Zone 3. While the minimum for erosion control is \$45,000 in Zone 1 compared to \$35,000 in Zone 3, irrigation in Zone 3 carries a minimum \$430,000 cost compared to Zone 1's \$370,000 minimum.

"You may find that you would use the high side of those ranges in the Northeast more than in the South," Sasser said. "In the Northeast, regulations are much more strict. In Birmingham, with all its rock, you would use high numbers for earthmoving. In Atlanta, which has very strict erosion-control laws, those figures would be high."

Kubly pointed out the figures do not include grow-in costs. They are generally higher in the North because of the region's shorter construction season, and the longer time cool-season grasses take to grow.

Arnold said he expected to release the construction document at the International Golf Course Conference and Show in Orlando, Feb. 8-11.

SUNRIDGE CANYON OPENS

FOUNTAIN HILLS, Ariz. — SunRidge Canyon Golf Club has opened, already receiving recognition for its challenging design and breathtaking canyon setting. Tom Patrick, vice president of golf operations for Sun Cor Resort & Golf Management, said: "For every aspect, from course design to development and construction to golf operations, our goal was to have the best in the industry involved with the project. I believe we have achieved our goal."

RTJII takes plunge into public golf ownership

EAGLE POINT, Ore. — Robert Trent Jones II (RTJII) has embarked upon its first solo venture into golf course ownership and operation, with the development of the Eagle Point Golf Club here.

Eagle Point is the first high-quality, championship golf facility to be completed in southern Oregon by RTJII. It is scheduled to open for public play this summer.

The course will be the centerpiece of a 350-acre golf and residential community master-planned by RTJII.

The golf course portion of the project features an 18-hole championship layout, state-of-the-art practice facility and 7,000-square-foot

clubhouse complete with pro shop and dining facilities. RTJII, which operates under the direction of President and Principal Designer Robert Trent Jones Jr., will operate and manage the golf facility.

Grassing has been completed, and the entire course reflects the RTJ2 design philosophy of providing the golfer with a challenging and playable golfing experience.

Various points on the course offers spectacular views of the Rogue Valley, Mount McLoughlin and the Table Rocks. Eagle Point can be played at 5,245 yards from the forward tees or stretched out to 6,970 yards from the championship markers.

