

By PETER BLAIS

The latest National Golf Foundation (NGF) figures should lay to rest any worries about the continued health of the U.S. golf course development industry.

Just consider:

- A record 468 courses opened in '95.
- Another 1,368 are either under construction or in planning.

The good news out of Jupiter, Fla., can be echoed here in Yarmouth, Maine, home of *Golf Course News* and its sister publication, the *Golf Course News Development Letter*, a twice-monthly subscription newsletter tracking golf course development throughout the country and providing the names and telephone numbers of key contact people.

For the past 3 1/2 years, the *GCN Development Letter* has chronicled the continued success of developers in locating capital, architects in placing courses on often-challenging sites, builders in constructing environmentally friendly facilities and owners/management companies in paving the way for successful openings.

We have been particularly pleased with the strength of the resurgent Midwest, known not so long ago as America's Rustbelt, which has far surpassed other regions of the country in new development the past four years. The most recent *GCN Development Letter*, for instance, reported on such projects as:

- A 36-hole Robert Trent Jones II-designed layout in Kansas City pro-

posed by a Springfield, Mo.-based developer that should start construction this summer.

- An 18-hole course planned by a Yorkville, Ill., couple currently attempting to obtain the last of their permits prior to starting construction.

• A 27-hole public course on South Padre Island along the south Texas coast that Delos Partners, an Albany, Ohio-based development company, hopes to begin constructing this year.

GCN Development Letter subscribers learned about these projects early enough to benefit from the knowledge. Non-subscribers are forced to play catch up.

The Southeast continues to attract the interest of developers catering to the golfing needs of tourists and retirees heading for the fun and sun capital of the world. The most recent issue listed projects planned in Louisiana, North Carolina and Mississippi and updates on courses under construction in Alabama and Virginia.

The staff has noted and the *GCN Development Letter* reported on encouraging developments occurring in economically depressed areas of the country — the Northeast and Far West.

If you read the *Development Letter*, you'd already know this stuff



Peter Blais, associate editor

Mt. Greylock, near the once-prosperous city of Adams in Western Massachusetts is a good example. For years, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, has talked of developing the 1,000-plus acres it owns at the base of the mountain. The *GCN Development Letter* recently reported the state has issued

a revised Request for Development Proposals based on a fully approved master plan allowing for 27 holes of golf, conference center and residential development. The state even offered to contribute \$6.5 million toward the project. Subscribers were made aware of the May 22 application deadline. Non-subscribers, well...

The other trend we've noted from the birth of *Golf Course News* almost eight years ago is the growth of public golf. Where the emphasis a decade ago was on private courses and residential development, today's developers are looking to tap the emerging daily-fee market. Ninety-one percent of the courses listed in the most recent issue of the *GCN Development Letter* were public layouts. That percentage has remained fairly consistent over the past few years.

The primary goal of the *GCN Devel-*

opment Letter is to inform subscribers of proposed golf projects as early as possible in the planning process so that developers, architects, builders, suppliers and others associated with the golf industry can improve their chances of becoming profitably involved.

As NGF Vice President and General Manager of Research and Consulting Rick Norton said recently: "To my mind, the fact that golf course development has not only held its own, but has increased to the extent that it has, is a great example of the confidence that both developers and lenders continue to have in the health and future of the game."

We here at *Golf Course News* share that confidence and can help those in the industry benefit from the game's growth through the *GCN Development Letter*. If you are interested in seeing a recent issue, I look forward to hearing from you.

GCN DEVELOPMENT LETTER CONTACT INFORMATION

In addition to his duties as associate editor of *Golf Course News*, Peter Blais is editor of the *Golf Course News Development Letter*, a twice-monthly newsletter that tracks golf course projects throughout the country. The *Development Letter* costs \$195 per year and can be mailed or faxed to your office. For more information contact Blais at *Golf Course News Development Letter*, P.O. Box 997, Yarmouth, Maine 04096; telephone 207-846-0600; facsimile 207-846-0657.



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