

RATCLIFFE ON LINE

To learn more about Ratcliffe Golf Services' Paradise Valley Par-3 and Sunset Hills Public Golf Course, people can visit their web sites: <http://www.paradisegolf.com> and <http://www.sunsethills.com>

Paradise Valley

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his apartments to compete with your golf course."

Developers could also take advantage of the green space requirements that many communities have, since a par-3, or chip-and-putt layout needs very little land.

Paradise Valley Par-3, with an average-length hole of 70 yards, is situated on 15 acres — 13 for the course and two for the clubhouse, parking lot and miniature golf course.

The Summit Green apartments sit on about 20 acres. They are already about 90 percent full, Ratcliffe said, and a lot of those apartment-dwellers are using the Paradise Valley facilities. "Many are non-golfers," he said, "but the project appealed to them because they wanted the aesthetics of living on a golf course. Roughly 60 percent of the units front on the course."

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Part of Ratcliffe Golf Services' marketing objective is to target the approximately 85 to 90 percent of the population who are not active golfers.

Citing the "intimidation factor" of learning golf on a regulation course, he said his firm has positioned itself to get beginners into the game.

"There is a lack of facilities to

bridge the 'learning gap' between the local driving range and the full-scale, 18-hole golf course," Ratcliffe said. "I believe we have hit upon a means to not only provide such facilities, but make them profit centers in themselves.

"To bridge the gap between banging balls at a range and being a knowledgeable, accomplished golfer, there is no other way but the par-3 golf course. We have a driving range with a discount shop. We can provide them with equipment and range time, graduate them to the par-3 to learn techniques and etiquette, then graduate them to an 18-hole facility — our Sunset Hills Public Golf Course.

Ratcliffe hopes to take the idea to other areas. "I want to go in and be involved in the design," he said. "We have the experience now of having done it. The potential for my company is as a developer and builder and then offering management services on a contract basis."

The cost? Paradise Valley Par-3 cost \$600,000 to build — although Ratcliffe said he would typically want to budget \$800,000 to \$1 million — and the accompanying apartments cost approximately \$18 million, he said.

The course was the first design by local architect and land planner Ken Andrews, an avid golfer.



Of the 268 acres at the Palmer-designed Lost Key GC in Perdido Key, Fla., more than 100 were left in their natural state.

Palmer unveils two Fla. tracks: Legacy & Lost Key

SARASOTA, Fla. — Arnold Palmer dedicated his newest Florida golf course, The Legacy at Lakewood Ranch, here in March. The 7,000-yard daily-fee course, designed by Palmer Course Design Company, is a hallmark of "environmental enhancement."

Accompanied by his partner, Ed Seay, and Vicki Martz, project architect on The Legacy, Palmer reviewed the course in March and conducted a golf clinic on the practice range.

Meanwhile, across the Gulf of Mexico on the barrier island of Perdido Key near Pensacola, the Palmer-designed Lost Key Golf Club has

opened for play. It will be managed by Western Golf Properties of Scottsdale, Ariz. Lost Key is an 18-hole daily-fee course within the new community of Lost Key on Perdido Key. Of the 268 acres allocated for the course, 100 have been designated wetlands and been left in their natural state. This commitment has earned the club designation as an Audubon Sanctuary Course.

Western Golf appointed two of its staff from the Falcon's Fire Golf Club in Kissimmee, Fla., to lead Lost Key. Shane Trice is the new director of golf, while Scott Scamehorn is head golf course superintendent.

Ault Clark, ClubCorp team in Northern Virginia

By MARK LESLIE

LEESBURG, Va. — Loudoun County's population is exploding, and ClubCorp of America is taking advantage of the situation, using a prime property edging the Potomac River.

The 18-hole River Creek Golf on the Potomac, designed by

Ault Clark and Associates of Kensington, Md., "will be spectacular," said Tom Clark.

Battling the wettest year in history in 1996, Wadsworth Golf Construction Co. expects to complete its work by June 1 and have the course ready to open in September.

Responding to a continued population growth in Loudoun County, golf course developers have brought in Tom Fazio, Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer to design other courses in the area.

The all-bentgrass River Creek will feature five holes along the Potomac, Clark said. Years ago, he said, the river scoured the area and "we have 70-foot-high cliffs" on the site.

Meanwhile, Goose Creek runs perpendicular to the Potomac and through two holes. Elevation change on the layout is dramatic. From the flood plain to the highest point is well over 100 feet, Clark explained.

"The rest of the holes meander over open areas and we let them take on a links look for the first few years until homes are built," he said. "It's a 900-acre property, so homes won't bother the course."

The track will play from 5,100 to more than 7,000 yards on four sets of tees.

ClubCorp bought then-River Creek Golf and Country Club from project developer River Creek L.L.C., an entity owned by the Abramson family and Marcus W. Montgomery.

The project will encompass a gate-guarded community, four tennis courts, a six-lane lap pool, toddler pool and clubhouse.

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