

Garl named head of Fla. Golf Alliance

New association should be major lobbying force

LAKELAND, Fla. — Course architect Ron Garl has been named president of the newly formed Florida Golf Alliance.

"Florida's Golf Industry has been splintered far too long," said Garl. "With all of the golf associations and organizations residing in Florida united under the Florida Golf Alliance, we will become a healthy resource that the industry can draw upon and a strong influence to be

contended with in Tallahassee."

The Florida Golf Alliance was formed after several formal meetings held over 14 months from September 1996 through last December, with most of the core Florida golf associations/organizations invited or in attendance. The mission statement for the incorporated FGA reads: "The Florida Golf Alliance's mission is to unify Florida's golf industry into an effective

alliance in order to promote and to protect the industry as a major contributor to the state's economy, environment, and quality of life."

"It just makes sense," said Roy Bates, immediate past president of the Florida Turfgrass Association and vice president of the FGA. "We're all conducting research and providing grants for special projects to benefit our respective association goals. But few of us are sharing the knowledge, or even know how to



Ron Garl

ask that might have information to help a particular cause."

"The FGA is a means for the industry to unite and start to become aligned for a targeted productive future," Bates added.

The founding FGA members and board of directors are PGA Tour representative Richard Bowers, LPGA Tour representative Terri McCracken, Tommy Armour Golf Tour representative Terry Fine, Florida Turfgrass Association representative Roy Bates, Florida Chapter Golf Course Managers Association representative Mike Fiddelke, Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association representatives Joe Ondo and Joel Jackson, and Mercury Titleholders Championship representative Ann Palmer.

Garl was voted the association's first president because of "his dedication to the sport and obvious dedication to serve Florida's golf industry through his many and varied affiliations with Florida's golf associations."

Garl has served on numerous boards and committees over the past 28 years. "Although each affiliation is treasured by me for different reasons, my service to the Florida Turfgrass Association on the IFAS advisory board for the University of Florida comes closest to what I envision for the Florida Golf Alliance," said Garl. "Our goals were consistently focused on the industry as a whole — not various special projects.

"That's what the FGA will be about — all industry representatives uniting and making decisions as an alliance regarding priorities to benefit Florida's golf industry."

"Given the distinction of the founding groups that have banded together to fund the start-up of this alliance I am confident that this unification will succeed," Garl said.

At the next meeting a special invitation will be reviewed for mailing, along with the 1998 FGA business plan for inclusion, in order to invite all identifiable Florida golf associations and organizations to become FGA members and share a seat on the board of directors.

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GCN/NOVEMBER

Textron Financial passes \$700 million funding milestone

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — Textron Financial Corp.'s (TFC) Golf Course Finance Division, which is entering its 10th year in the golf course financing business, recently closed deals that raise its total loan commitments to more than \$700 million.

According to TFC, the company has now financed 117 golf course projects. "We're delighted that our versatility has enabled us to get to this level, and to have the momentum to keep on rising," said Ray Munoz, vice president and division manager.

TFC estimates that of the 16,000 golf facilities in the United States, about 9,000 are candidates for financing for expansion and other improvements.