

GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

A UNITED PUBLICATION
VOLUME 10, NUMBER 2
FEBRUARY 1998 • \$5.50

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Asian Downturn Foreshadowed

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IT'S ALL ABOUT PERMITTING

Permitting planner Dianna Almini, here with senior architect Neal Meagher, puts Graves & Pascuzzo Design Co. on the fast track in the approval process. See page 49.

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Troon inks first international deal

By PETER BLAIS and wire service reports

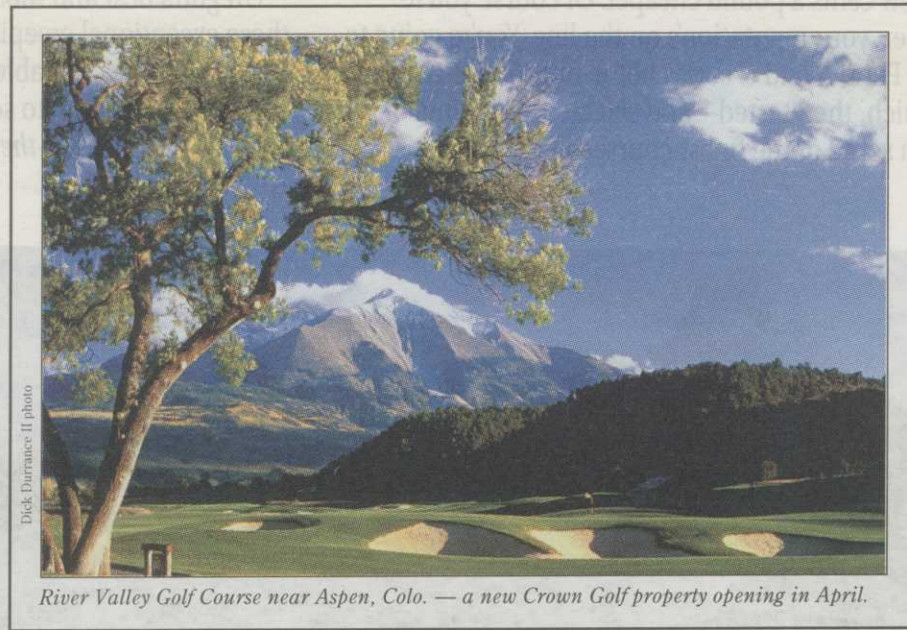
SCOTTSDALE, Arizona, USA — Troon Golf, a major U.S. course development and management firm, has expanded into the international market with the addition of two of Scotland's most famous layouts, the Ailsa and Arran courses at Turnberry.

The Scottsdale, Arizona-based company will manage the two courses and hold a minority subordinated ownership interest.

The resort was acquired for approximately \$51.5 million by Starwood Lodging Corporation, based in Phoenix, Ariz., from Nitto Kogyo Co. Ltd., a golf course ownership firm based in Tokyo. Nitto Kogyo had owned the 800-acre development since 1987 and invested \$35 million in the property.

"Today [Dec. 23, 1997], is a momentous day for our company," said Troon President Dana Garmany. "Ex-

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Dick Durance II photo

River Valley Golf Course near Aspen, Colo. — a new Crown Golf property opening in April.

Philippines puts golf development on hold



By M. LEVANS

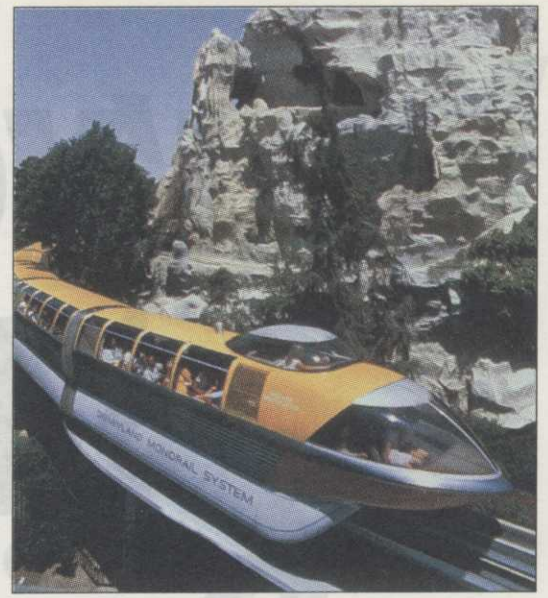
MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine government has ordered a halt to the building of new golf

courses due to water shortages caused by the El Nino weather pattern.

The Philippine Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) stopped processing land conversion applications by golf course developers until the drought situation ends, which may not be until mid-1998.

"This is an initiative...to conserve water in the light of the El Nino phenomenon and the growing criti-

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It's GCSAA Showtime!

It's time to lace up the comfortable shoes. The GCSAA's 69th International Golf Course Conference and Show rolls into sunny Anaheim, Calif., February 2-8, with more than 650 exhibitors and seven days of conference sessions. For more details on GCSAA annual awards, conference schedule and ways to get the most out your show experience, see pages 43-48.

Course projects upgrade disadvantaged communities

By JERRY ROSE and PETER BLAIS

PHOENIX — What do you usually see behind the flagstick on the front cover of most golf magazines?

Pounding surf, red rock cliffs, majestic mountains, virgin forests.

Rarely do you see smoke stacks, turnpikes or housing projects. But it's the courses built with these backdrops that often have the most positive impact on their immediate surroundings. A new golf development in a less-than-desirable part of town can have a tremendous influence on the local community's overall economy.

A perfect example is the Raven Golf Club at South Mountain in Phoenix. It was built in 1995 at a cost of more than \$14 million, almost all of which was spent with local companies involved in the development project. It also provides 80 jobs to local residents with an annual

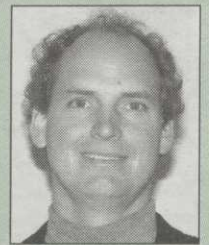
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BEST BUILDERS OF THE YEAR

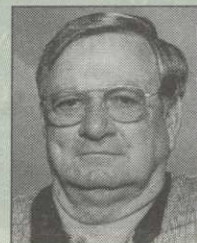
Landscapes Unlimited and its president, Bill Kubly, have won the Golf Course Builder of the Year Award, while President Howard Barnes and V-P J.W. Thomas of Quality Grassing & Services grabbed Best Small Builder of the Year Award. A Small Builder Honorable Mention Award goes to Turf Drain, Inc. and its president, Geoffrey Cortlett. See pages 38-42.



Bill Kubly



Geoffrey Cortlett



J.W. Thomas



Howard Barnes

Courses cornerstone of communities

Continued from page 1

payroll of approximately \$1.9 million. And, 95 percent of its annual expenditures are spent with local companies.

According to Phoenix City Councilman Cody Williams, who represents Raven's district, not a single new housing development was built in the area after the early

1970s. This dearth of activity wreaked havoc upon the district's economy and its quality of life.

"It used to be that this was a thriving area with an economically diverse population that supported all kinds of businesses and amenities for its residents," Williams said. "However, during the 1970s many of the more af-

fluent families began moving to other, newer areas of town, and most of the businesses went with them. Thunderbird Country Club was the exception. Those homes held their values and remained a strong part of the community."

Today, Raven Golf Club at South Mountain is a cornerstone of redevelopment for the entire

area. The course has gained statewide and national attention and has attracted scores of people to south Phoenix who otherwise would have no reason to visit the area. Likewise, a variety of new businesses and real-estate developments are in the works.

So far, two new residential communities are under development as a result of Raven's presence with six additional homebuilders and two commer-

cial entities considering projects in the area. Among the first to ante up was The Pines at The Raven, a community of 80 new single-family homes built adjacent to Raven Golf Club at South Mountain where prices range from the \$140s to the \$160s.

"This community wouldn't be here if it were not for Raven Golf Club. And, I think the same holds true for the majority of new activity in this part of town," said Barney Feldman, designated broker for The Pines at The Raven.

One of the beneficiaries is John Augustine, owner of Phoenix-based Desert Tree Farms, a company that manufactures plants from seed, cuttings and tissue cultures for landscape projects. The explosive growth of golf developments across the area has created an incredible demand for the types of high-quality, drought-tolerant trees and plants Augustine specializes in manufacturing. His business averages about \$5 million in sales each year, and Augustine estimates that 15 percent of that revenue is either directly or indirectly attributable to the golf industry.

Elsewhere, the \$20 million Desert Pines Golf Club in Las Vegas opened in late December 1996. The Walters Group built the Perry Dye-designed course in 96-acre Nature Park, a nice-sounding name for a neglected piece of city-owned property bounded on four sides by freeways and public streets in an economically depressed area.

"The golf course is located in a section of town that needs an infusion of new business," said City Councilman Gary Reese, who represents Las Vegas' Ward 3 where Desert Pines was built. "We expect other developments to look at investing in the neighborhood."

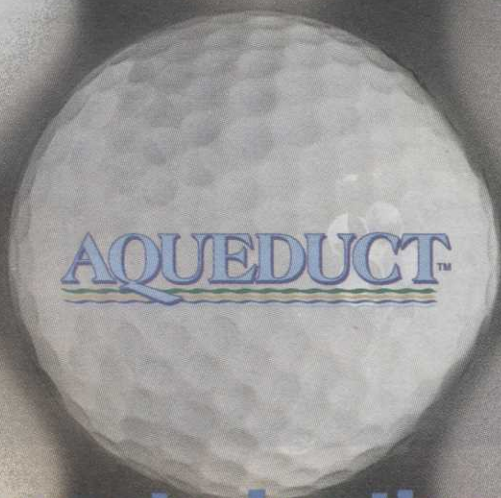
Walters Group subsidiary Southwest Golf bought the land and operates the course. Chief Operating Officer Allen Jones noted that a 2,000-employee family court building, a couple municipal buildings and several restaurants have dressed up the area in recent years. Many vacant lots have been cleaned up, Jones said, and local residents make up a good part of the course work force.

In a city where \$100-plus greens fees are the norm, Desert Pines lets city and Clark County residents play for less than a third the charge for out-of-town players. The course has also initiated golf learning programs for underprivileged youth with requirements for school attendance, good grades and proper course etiquette.

"Another thing I like about it is that when we started there was virtually no wildlife here," said Bill Walters, principal of The Walters Group. "Now hundreds of birds, especially roadrunners, sandpipers, doves and waterfowl, have returned. Their presence really adds to the experience."

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