

## Michigan continues leadership in development

FLINT, Mich. — Statistics compiled by the National Golf Foundation (NGF) indicate 64 courses under construction in Michigan as of December 1997, with 39 additional in the planning stages.

Given the national average of 21 months from start to finish on a golf project, that's 103 new courses that will be available to the state's golfer's by 1999.

The newest is Quail Ridge, a \$6-million, daily-fee course being built amid the flurry of Michigan construction. Randy Erskine, a former PGA Tour player and head golf professional

at Great Oaks Country Club in Rochester, has hooked up with Plymouth architect Ray Hearn and together they have a chosen a spot near Grand Rapids. It's a rolling, wooded piece of Cascade Township with some wetlands. Hearn calls it one of the best links sites he has seen in his 13-year career.

NGF figures show that the 64 courses under construction in Michigan is second only to California, which has 71. Michigan topped the nation in 1996 and 1997 in NGF under-construction numbers, which tend to be conservative.

Michigan also topped the nation in 1997 with 34 openings.

Florida was second with 32, Indiana third with 21 and California had 19. Wisconsin (19), Ohio (18) and Minnesota (16), were also in the top 10. This indicates that the northern states are ignoring the short golf season and are building courses.

With last year's openings, Michigan now has 906 courses, according to the NGF. Only Florida with 1,170, and Califor-

nia, 942, have more. Of Michigan's courses, 666 are public links, 93 municipal and 147 private. Ninety percent of the 103 to come will be public tracks. Nationwide, 85 percent of the courses built in 1997 were public, according to the NGF.

Hearn predicts that a drop-off in golf course construction is inevitable, though it doesn't appear it will happen anytime soon.

## Muskegon County adds Moss Ridge

RAVENNA, Mich. — A 254-acre championship course is under construction here and the first nine holes will likely open for play next year on Memorial Day weekend. Moss Ridge Golf Course is this town's newest 18-hole links and is being built on longtime family farm land owned by Jack Moss, who died two years ago.

Architect W. Bruce Matthews III of East Lansing designed the 6,700-yard, par-72 layout that cuts through rolling apple orchards. The Moss Ridge project includes 52 single-family home sites skirting the perimeter of the track. Six holes wind through rolling orchards, six holes are adjacent to water and six holes offer a more open links-type experience with bunkers. Fifty-five bunkers will dot the course.

A full practice facility equipped with a driving range with targets, three greens and chipping bunkers will also complement the layout, in addition to a clubhouse that will seat 60 to 80 people.

Domres Construction of Manistee is the general contractor of the project. Moss Ridge will be the 10th public golf course in Muskegon County.

### FAMILY GOLF OPENS DOMED OHIO FACILITY

WHITEHALL, Ohio — Family Golf Centers is bringing a domed golf facility to this Central Ohio town. The \$2 million to \$3 million proposal for a family-oriented center won high praise from the Whitehall City Council. It will include a miniature course, indoor and outdoor driving ranges, pro shop, restaurant and batting cages. The facility will also be attractive to novice golfers, offering them an assortment of lessons, according to officials. The driving range opened in late May. The entire project will be completed by November.

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