

Proposed Arizona bill could cost millions

Courses claim that tax break is necessary to survival

PHOENIX — A state lawmaker plans to introduce a bill that would end the property tax breaks enjoyed by the majority of Arizona's 300 golf courses.

Currently, land dedicated to golf course use is assessed at \$500 an acre, plus a low per-hole assessment, which is far below comparable land developed with homes or businesses. Even vacant land on the outskirts of Phoenix is reportedly assessed as much as 50 times higher than golf course property.

State Rep. Ken Chevront, a Democrat from central Phoenix, has said that overall, Arizona golf courses are assessed at least \$1 billion below their values.

"We need to bring them up to their real value," Chevront told *The Arizona Republic*.



"They [courses] wouldn't be built if they were assessed at a higher rate."

— Troon Pres. Dana Garmany

lic. "These courses are businesses and it is not fair to other businesses and homeowners that they are shifting the tax burden to everyone else."

Golf industry officials have countered that such breaks are necessary for golf courses to make profits, especially those built mainly as amenities to attract home buyers to new developments or tourists to hotels.

Dana Garmany, president of Troon Golf, said: "Golf courses in many cases are built as amenities, not as a business alone to make money. They wouldn't be built if they were assessed at a higher rate."

CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'

San Mateo layout awaiting final city approvals

SAN MATEO, Calif. — The planning stages for the new and improved San Mateo Golf Course have been completed and all that remains is the final approval of the city's Parks and Recreation Department.

Architect Stephen Halsey designed the renovation, which will bring substantial changes to the look and feel of the public, 18-hole layout. Along with improved and enlarged greens on

nearly every hole, the course will also be softened by replacing chain-link fence and cement-lined sloughs with lakes and grass. The course, which includes seven lakes, will be 6,028 yards from the championship tees.

The final three holes on the new San Mateo Golf Course will be completely original creations. Work on the renovation is tentatively scheduled to start in March 1999.

Developer proposes nine-hole links in Oakland

OAKLAND, Calif. — A developer has proposed building a nine-hole, executive course along with 172 upscale homes and 230 apartments on the 183-acre park-like grounds of the Oak Knoll Naval Hospital.

Shea Homes of Northern California's plan for the shuttered base in East Oakland Hills includes a \$2 million retrofit of the venerable but run-down

Club Knoll, new fields and tennis courts, a renovation of the base's Olympic-sized pool, new clubhouse facilities, and a driving range.

The new course would follow the terrain of the woody base, which is traversed by Rifle Range Creek.

Once built, the golf and recreational facilities would be turned over to the city.

Poellot, San Jose agree on new course deal

SAN JOSE, Calif. — San Jose city officials are moving ahead with plans to build a \$10.4 million, 18-hole, daily-fee course along Coyote Creek. The city council has authorized an agreement with the J. Michael Poellot Golf Design Group of Sarasota, Fla., to design the layout.

Construction could start on the course this spring with a tentative opening date of March 2000. The course has been tentatively called Coyote Creek Golf Course, although another nearby course is reportedly planning to rename itself Coyote Creek Golf Club.

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Irrigation renovation planned for Hawaiian links

WAILUA, Hawaii - The multi-million-dollar reconstruction of a leaky and outdated irrigation system at the Wailua Golf Course could begin in early April, according to course superintendent Brian Carew.

Depending on what is eventually approved, the project could involve the replacement of irrigation lines, two

pumps and irrigation heads and the abandonment of a 10,000-gallon irrigation tank. The county hopes that once the work is done, the layout will once again be a major attraction for local and visiting golfers on the island of Kauai. Wailua was consistently rated among the best municipal courses in the country during the 1980s.

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