

NIAGARA FALLS — Two of Canada's leading golf course architects, Thomas McBroom and Douglas Carrick, have been chosen to design a 45-hole destination golf facility along the Niagara River Parkway, said The Niagara Parks Commission Chairman Brian Merrett.

McBroom and Carrick teamed up for the first time to win the bid to design the 700-acre devel-

Carrick, McBroom team up along Niagara

opment south of Niagara Falls. Each will design his own 18-hole course, and combine their talents on a nine-hole executive course and practice facility.

"Our goal is to attract golfers from across the country and around the world, to golf Niagara again and again," said Merrett. "This facility will act as a catalyst

for Niagara's entire golf industry, and will serve as a major draw, clearly putting Niagara on the international golf tourist market."

The Niagara Parks Commission is taking a lead role in the plan to market Niagara as a golf destination. The commission recognizes the golf industry as an opportunity to add a significant piece to

Niagara's tourist infrastructure, fitting in with such attractions as Casino Niagara, the burgeoning estate wine industry, and the Shaw Festival.

"This is a very ambitious project. Golfers will be able to play two distinctively different ... courses," said McBroom.

Of the design, Carrick said,

"We will incorporate the scenic, natural environment of the land, including Ussher's Creek and the spectacular view of the Niagara River. Our goal is to combine the natural beauty and environment with a challenging, yet highly playable course."

Construction of the courses is slated to begin in October and be completed in September 2000. The facility is scheduled to open in July 2001.

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dozen family and friends have purchased stock. The last component is prepaid packages, where people get golf privileges for advanced tee times."

BUILDING

Hammer used his civil engineering background and golf course training to lower the costs of construction, citing "sweat equity" as his greatest savings. "From planning to doing legwork for the architect, being the general contractor and saving the general contractor markup — it has paid off," he said.

Hammer's background exposed him to all facets of construction, including earthwork, drainage systems and stormwater studies. He hired an excavation contractor who did the heavy work, dug the irrigation pond and performed some significant land shaping.

Haugen used his own bulldozers to shape greens and tee complexes. In all, about 75,000 cubic yards of earth were moved.

Though he expects the course to open in midsummer next year, Hammer has mapped out a long-range plan for improvements to the facility.

"For instance," he said, "we only built a few sand bunkers. We will add them as we go. I look at it as a 5- to 10-year project. It will be a \$3-million project when we're done."

Hammer is leasing a structure for a clubhouse for the first three or four seasons.

"It's primarily economic," he said. "A new golf course takes a few years to reach full stride in terms of volume of play. Until the potential is there for the complimentary or spin-off revenues in pro shop and food and beverage, it's hard to justify a \$300,000 to \$400,000 clubhouse. That can be a fatal flaw."

For the kid who started golfing when he was 12, who played on his high school golf team and attracted the attention of some small college golf coaches, fatal flaws are to be avoided when pursuing his dream. He thinks that will be more than evident when he opens Siren Glen's doors next year.