

# Partnering

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An example of the partnering method in progress is construction of Murphy Creek Golf Course in this Colorado city. Work began on the 18-hole, links-style course in August. Before ground was even broken, a partnering session was held with RBI Golf, Inc., the general con-

tractor; the owner, the city of Aurora; course architect Ken Kavanaugh; Merrick Engineers and Associates; and other project representatives. This meeting enabled each party to share its views and perspectives on how to best accomplish the project.

"We basically agreed to agree," said Ricky Maher, president of RBI Golf, Inc. "Partnering keeps the lines of communication open. This is key in making

sure everyone remains on the same page throughout the course of the project."

The partnering session, held at a neutral site in the Denver metropolitan area, was co-facilitated by Jody Randall, vice president of RBI, and Dennis Lyon, manager of golf for the city of Aurora and former president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. An overview of the project's history was presented, and the group developed and signed a mission statement.

Unlike a contract, partnering is not legally binding, said Randall. "Yet, it establishes effective working relationships among the stakeholders."

Randall has facilitated a number of partnering sessions for construction projects throughout the Western United States.

According to Randall, the key elements to partnering consist of commitment; equity; trust; development of mutual goals and objectives; implementation of the goals and objectives; continuous evaluation; and timely responsiveness.

"Everyone involved has to be committed to the idea of partnering before it can work," she said.

A partnering agreement often is initiated by the owner or general contractor. In the case of Murphy Creek, the city and RBI Golf pursued the method since it worked well with another of the city's golf course projects that RBI Golf built in 1995-1996. In fact, Saddle Rock Golf Course was the first job in which RBI Golf implemented the partnering methods, and the outcome was positive, according to those involved.

"Based on our experience with Saddle Rock, a partnering session and a partnering attitude are critical for the success of large projects," said Lyon.

So far, the partnering process for Murphy Creek has helped move forward the \$6.3 million project. According to Kavanaugh, the method has been helpful. "I never understood why various entities I have worked with on past projects competed against each other, even though they were working toward a common goal."

The initial partnering session in August was followed by weekly progress meetings held at the project site throughout construction. Here, the group discusses upcoming tasks, along with time schedules and potential problems.

"A lot more people are involved in the construction of a golf course than most people think. One can affect another and not even know it," said Mike Osley, Aurora's superintendent of Murphy Creek. "Partnering allows all the parties involved to focus on the overall picture. This helps to create a better product."

Construction on Murphy Creek is scheduled to wrap up this summer. The city is planning an opening date for the course in the spring of 2000.

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