

Coushatta tribe breaks ground on \$100-million golf resort

KINDER, La. — Envisioning 900 jobs and millions in tourism dollars, the Coushatta tribe of Louisiana has broken ground on a \$100-million golf and convention center here at the Grand Casino Coushatta gambling resort, 35 miles north of Lake Charles.

The 7,353-yard, par-72 cham-

pionship-quality course, designed by golf architect Kevin Tucker of Nashville, Tenn., will be named The Ace of Clubs. Forty acres of lakes are being developed and will come into play on 14 of the holes. To preserve wetlands, Tucker created dual routes to the greens on three of the holes. The facility will in-

clude a 5,000-square-foot clubhouse, an outing pavilion and a "gambling hole" where hole-in-one contests will take place.

The course will feature ultra-dwarf Bermudagrass greens as well as five different native grasses and wildflowers outside the rough for color and contrast. What was a farm will become a

rolling meadowland, with each fairway defined by huge earthen berms and trees. Each fairway will be separated from others, creating a unique environment for each hole.

Promising an atmosphere where architecture, landscaping, pools and courtyard envelop visitors in the hospitality and style of

Old New Orleans, the project will feature a 200-room tour hotel, as well as a 450-room, 11-story convention hotel, which will include two floors of luxury suites, a 90,000-square-foot convention center, meeting rooms, events center, ballroom and a two-acre swimming pool courtyard.

The A/E Design Group Inc., of Shreveport, an architectural and engineering firm, will lead the project.

A special feature will be a 16-foot bronze sculpture, designed to incorporate the Coushatta's signature baskets with the sovereign nation's seven clans, which are represented by the Bobcat, Deer, Turkey, Panther, Bear, Beaver and Daddy Longlegs.

Steve Brown, president of A/E Design Group, said the construction will employ nearly 300 area workers. Some 900 permanent jobs are expected to be created when the complex opens in the summer of 2002, according to tribal chairman Lovelin Poncho and councilman William Worfel.

Oil and golf to mix in Arkansas

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. — Intent on building "the best golf course in Arkansas," oil man Ronny Hissom is teaming with Pro Star Golf of Hilton Head, S.C., on a project with more than two miles of frontage on White River in Goshen County.

The developers have engaged golf course architect Steve Smyers to design the 18-hole course, which will be the centerpiece of an upscale housing development, Circle H Golf Community, on the 800-acre property five miles east of the city.

With the University of Arkansas nearby, Smyers said he is designing the 7,500-yard course for the "modern player," adding, "We want them to hit long irons.

"It is a thinking man's design," said the Lakeland, Fla.-based architect. "That is what we do. We make the golfer study the course to negotiate it."

Rich Covelli of Pro Star Golf said a state-of-the-art training center will present golfers with "every shot they will encounter under normal playing conditions: uphill, downhill and sidehill lies, hitting over water, chipping areas, elevated greens. Audiovisual equipment will be available and all driving range stations will be grassed."

Hissom, president of Hissom Oil of Midland, Texas, is building the project on Circle H Farm, which his parents ran as a cattle ranch for many years.

He expects construction to begin around the first of the year and for the golf course to open in fall 2001 or spring 2002.



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