

Gregory is one of three CGCSs who also hold PGA memberships.

Mark Woodward, c.e.o. of the GCSAA, says people who take on the initiative to earn their associations' credentials only make the industry better.

"Somebody who's gone through the process to earn the credentials in both the PGA and GCSAA definitely has an interest in continuing education, and I would applaud them for that effort," he says. "Neither is easy to do."

SUPERINTENDENT FIRST

Gregory grew up working on a golf course in Indiana under the tutelage of pro-superintendent Jack Miller. While earning his two-year turf management certificate at Penn State, he started as a PGA apprentice. After graduating, he returned to his home course and served as the pro-superintendent for six years before moving to Liberty to be the golf professional. Ten years later, Liberty's superintendent died unexpectedly. Gregory stepped in and has fulfilled both roles for the past 12 years. Five years ago, he became a certified superintendent.

"The joy of my job is there's always something different going on," he says.

Gregory describes his club as anything but an exclusive place, adding that his business card says director of hot dog sales. On the maintenance side, he manages a seasonal staff of three full-time and six part-time employees. On the golf professional side, he has an assistant who teaches and oversees the junior program. Gregory also manages the pro shop, concession stand and the club's books.

"I act as the club manager, so my time is probably split 60/40 – 60 on the business end and 40 on the maintenance end," he says.

No one required Gregory to earn his CGCS designation, so why did he? Credibility, he says. By the time he took over superintendent duties at Liberty, he needed to brush up on his maintenance knowledge, so he attended any turf seminar he could.



Bruce Gregory, CGCS, PGA

"Because I was a golf pro, I was looking for a little credibility I might not have had and still might not have," he says. "I didn't want them to think, 'This guy's spending all his time

Getting along

The golf course industry is fraught with stories of head-butting between superintendents and PGA professionals. Though many say such strained relationships aren't as prevalent as they used to be, the tales are grounded in some truth because each staff member has his own agenda, and the two don't always converge. But that's definitely not the case at courses where the superintendents also are PGA professionals.

Brad Erickson, PGA, is the GCSAA Class A superintendent at Richland Country Club in Nashville, Tenn. Though he doesn't have daily golf professional duties, he says maintaining his PGA membership has been a benefit in disguise in terms of his relationships with the golf professionals at his club.

"I understand what they're going through, and I help them to see our issues," he says, adding that his dual experience helps him come up with compromises that work for both departments. "We have a busy membership, so there's the possibility for a strained relationship here, but I get more of the benefit of the doubt because they don't see me as someone trying to do something behind their back. It's not something we think about every day, but in the back of their minds, they know I'm a PGA pro just like them, so that adds some weight."

Mark Monahan, CGCS, PGA, at Paupack Hills Golf & Country Club in Greentown, Pa., is ribbed frequently by his peers at GCSAA meetings.

"They ask how I get along with the pro, and tell them I get along great with him," he says, laughing.

Monahan has been the superintendent at Paupack Hills for 25 years and obtained his PGA membership in 1990, though he ran the pro shop from the beginning of his tenure at the facility.

"The relationship between pros and superintendents used to be worse than it is now," he says. "People are finding they have to work together."

In addition to avoiding potential workplace friction, being the pro-superintendent sometimes has its side benefits. One of them is receiving compliments that otherwise would have gone unheard.

"All the members know I'm both the pro and the superintendent, but once in a while I'll meet a guest who will say something nice about the course and say, 'You must have a great superintendent,'" Monahan says. "I say, 'Yeah, he's really great.'"

behind the counter and saying he's a superintendent."

Other pro-superintendents settled into their dual roles by happenstance, too. Like Gregory, Mark Monahan, CGCS, PGA, at Paupack Hills Golf & Country Club in Greentown, Pa., worked on a golf course in high school and attended Penn State's turfgrass program. He graduated in 1970 and worked as a superintendent for 13 years, earning his certification in 1977.

Turns out, he also could play, and it didn't go unnoticed. One day he got a phone call from the president of Paupack Hills, asking him if he'd like the opportunity to run the facility's entire golf program – as the superintendent and golf



Nathan Migal, Imagen Photography

professional. He kept his amateur status for a year while running the pro shop before declaring professional and registering with the PGA program. Because he was a nonmember head professional, he earned only a half credit per month, so it took him three years to earn 36 credits and become a PGA member.

Day to day, Monahan splits his time almost equally between his pro-superintendent duties.

"On the weekends I'll be almost 100 percent a pro, and during the week, I'm about 70 percent a superintendent," he says.

On the golf professional side, Monahan has two assistants and manages an additional staff of four people, including his wife who works in



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CAREER MANAGEMENT



Mark Monahan,
CGCS, PGA

the pro shop. On the maintenance side, he's supported by one assistant superintendent and 10 to 12 crew members.

"I'm extremely happy with what I do," he says. "If I didn't do both, I'd be bored. It keeps me busy during the summers. I'm here seven days a week, but I get to goof off a bit in the winter."

It's difficult for Monahan to say which role he prefers, but he acknowledges that being the golf professional is more difficult than he thought it was when he was only a superintendent.

"I thought it was a lot easier before I started doing it," he says. "When you're the pro, you have to listen to members complain about what the superintendent is doing and many other things. The pro is the first person they usually see and complain to."

Asked whether he would recommend such a career path to students or younger superintendents, Monahan says he would, as long as they realize what they're getting into.

"It's difficult to find a job where someone would give you the opportunity to do both," he says. "I've met a lot of guys who've asked how I've gotten into it. The ones who want to do both are usually superintendents who are good golfers and want to grow into bigger positions. I've never met a pro who's said he'd also like to be a superintendent."

PRO FIRST

But they're out there. Take Brad Erickson, PGA. He's a GCSAA Class A superintendent at Richland Country Club in Nashville, Tenn. Erickson doesn't have any daily golf professional duties, but that's what he studied, and he maintains his PGA membership. Thankfully, he says, the GCSAA and PGA honor the bulk of each other's continuing education credits, making it easier on him to maintain both designations.

Like many others in the industry, Erickson grew up working on a golf course. When he first enrolled at Michigan State University, he was unsure what career path to pursue. He soon realized he was drawn to the golf business, so he enrolled in MSU's turf program. Like many college students, Erickson took a break from school to reevaluate what he wanted to do for a living while he worked for the family business.

Soon enough, he was drawn back to the golf world and enrolled in Ferris State University's professional golf management program. In 1994, in pursuit of his four-year degree, Erickson took a PGM internship at Richland County Club, where he's employed presently. Halfway into his eight month co-op, the facility decided to regrass its fairways, essentially shutting down the course.

"I could've stayed and been a part of the process or gone back to school," he says. "I chose to stay, hit it off with the superintendent and essentially got to be like the project manager. It was a great experience."

In 1998, after Erickson finished school, he moved to the West Coast and took a job as an assistant golf professional. He was unsatisfied with his job, making little money and looking to get out of golf, when he got a phone call from Tim Taylor, the superintendent he bonded with at Richland.

"He was looking for an assistant and didn't have many good resumes, so he offered me the job," he says.

Erickson accepted, and hasn't looked back on his career as a golf professional. Taylor has since moved on, and Erickson was promoted to superintendent and is pursuing his CGCS.

"It's like I fell back into what I should have been doing all along," he says. "I came full circle, and my talents led me back to what I was good at."



Brad Erickson, PGA



Allen Parkes, CGCS, PGA

Though Erickson isn't itching to take on any golf pro duties, he maintains his PGA membership because he believes it allows him to see the course as a golfer does.

"I'm not interested in teaching, but it's important to the operation, how we're perceived by membership and how we can relate that to the course," he says.

Erickson's dual experience has laid the groundwork for higher management roles in the future.

"It shows I'm proficient in not just growing grass, but the other departments," he says. "It helps me look at the operation as more of a business, and that helps if I'd like to take a step in a different direction and have more flexibility in my career."

BIGGER AND BETTER

Allen Parkes, PGA, CGCS, at Traditions at Chevy Chase in Wheeling, Ill., agrees that maintaining both designations helps one's resume stand out. Parkes, another graduate of Ferris State's professional golf management program, has been a PGA professional for 18 years and a member of the GCSAA for 12, seven as a CGCS.

"As industry professionals, we're all products," he says. "The dual certification differentiates me from all the other brands on the shelf. With 20,000-plus PGA professionals and just as many superintendents, anything a person can do to differentiate themselves can only be positive."

Ray Shane, PGA, and a Class A member of the GCSAA, is an example of someone whose experience as a superintendent and PGA pro has led to a greater management position. He's the golf program supervisor for the city of Madison, Wis., which operates four golf facilities. Shane estimates that 80 percent of his job entails managing maintenance operations and the remainder is overseeing clubhouse operations, including four PGA professionals.

Before entering his current position 19 years ago, he served as the pro-superintendent at Portage (Wis.) Country Club for 12 years. At first he was only the golf professional, but the facility's board appointed him the interim superintendent after theirs quit.

"Long story short, they liked the job I did and never got a replacement," he says. "I'd get the maintenance crew going in the morning, and by 11:00, I'd end my maintenance duties, take a shower and be the golf pro until five or six at night."

Shane credits both experiences as the reason he has his current job.

"If I didn't have all the experiences from the pro side and the superintendent side, I probably wouldn't have been considered for the position I hold," he says.

Shane, like the others, loves being privy to both sides of the industry.

"I've had a great time and learned an awful lot," he says. "It's a whole new perspective for everyone in turf. I would love to have every golf course superintendent work in a pro shop for a month and vice versa - have every pro mow greens and change cups. Until you work on the other side, you have no idea what it takes."

You could bet Old Tom Morris would agree. **GCI**



Ray Shane, PGA

There are 29 members of the GCSAA who are PGA professionals - three are CGCSs, 15 are Class A members and 11 are superintendent members. For a complete list of these pro-superintendents, visit www.golfcourseindustry.com/prosuper.



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A BUDDING BUILDER

An Eastern European comes to the U.S. for knowledge to use in burgeoning markets

BY JOHN WALSH

Imagine growing up without golf. No courses, no magazines, no TV programs. Imagine living under an oppressive government in the old Soviet Union. Imagine what it's like to build the first golf course in your home country. Meet someone who did: Maris Gulans.

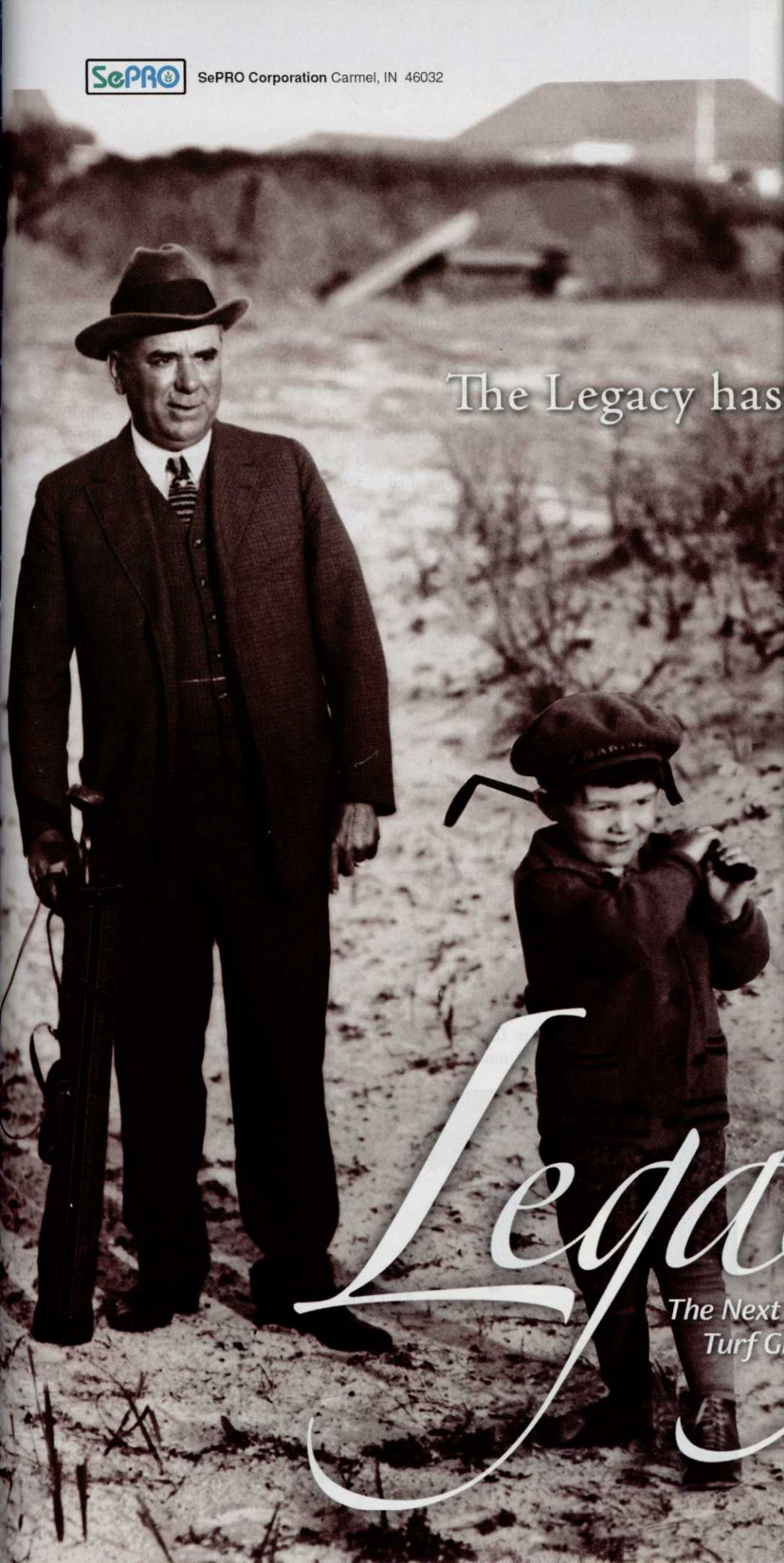
Gulans is managing director of Riga, Latvia-based Modo Riga, a construction company founded in 1993 that builds golf courses, among other nongolf projects. A young company, it has fewer than 10 courses in its portfolio. Gulans has been traveling the United States for the past few years to learn more about golf course construction, develop contacts in the business and network. A GCBA member, Gulans attends the association's summer meeting, as well as the Golf Industry Show, with his project managers every year.

"We're educating ourselves," he says. "There's a lot of information and many contacts here. There's no doubt America is the leader in the golf industry."

Because the golf industry in Eastern Europe isn't as advanced as in the U.S., Modo Riga uses American shapers. Gulans has his own shapers, too, but with certain courses, especially ones with big-name professional golfers attached to them, Europeans, in general, use American shapers.



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COURSE DEVELOPMENT

“My guys do most of the mass grading, but all the detail and finish work on bunkers and edges is coming from American shapers,” Gulans says. “All the new technologies, such as the SubAir Systems, are coming from the United States. If you’re not visiting the U.S., you’re not getting this new information. Knowing about new technologies has been a help for me to get my next jobs because I can explain these new technologies to owners.”

Gulans says the irrigation systems installed and seed grown on golf courses in the Baltic States and Russia come from the U.S. There’s some blending of local grass, but the main product is bought in America. There aren’t many educated greenkeepers in the Baltic States and Russia, either.

“The better grow-in guys are American,” he says.

Modo Riga, which built the Ozo Golf Club in Latvia, hired an American to work with the local crew and train a local guy about growing in and maintaining a golf course.

“There are a lot of people in the Baltic States who don’t know what golf means,” Gulans says. “Maybe now they understand, but when we started in 1993, they knew nothing. There’s no manager who can run a clubhouse and no pro who can teach the people to golf. We import these people temporarily.”

Teaching professionals and managers also come from England and Sweden.

UPBRINGING

Gulans was born in 1961 in Ilukste, Latvia, which was part of the Soviet Union.

“We were one big red country, and there was absolutely no golf in the country because of the politics,” he says. “The belief was that golf was for very rich people, and it didn’t mesh well with society because workers were running the country. There was not one golf course and not much information about golf.”

At that time, the Soviet Union had 15 republics, three of those were the Baltic-state republics – Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. In 1961, the Soviet and communist roots in Latvia were deep.

“My grandparents were farmers, and they remember what it meant to have a private business,” Gulans says. “But when I grew up, private companies weren’t allowed in the country. There were just government companies, and everyone had to work for the government.”

Gulans went to Riga Polytechnical Institute (Riga Technical University since 1990) at age 18 and earned a degree in architecture and civil engineering, graduating in five years as a civil/building engineer. Because he was interested in sports, Gulans read about the game of golf in a magazine sent to him by his uncle, who owned a business in Germany. The idea, though still illegal, struck his imagination.

In the late 1980s, Mikhail Gorbachev opened Russia to private businesses and Gulans’ dream was suddenly possible.

“I was just 24 years old at the time, just after attending the university,” he says. “I immediately said, ‘Oh man! Now’s the time to build a golf course.’ But we had no idea how to build one, so we contacted some Germans for ideas. We understood it was impossible for us because



As a young man growing up in Soviet-run Latvia where private businesses were outlawed, builder Maris Gulans dreamed of building and opening a golf course.

of the money required to build one. Building a golf course is a big investment, but we wanted to do it because it was the first time a golf course was allowed to be built in the Soviet Union.”

Unable to fund the construction of a golf course, Gulans began building miniature golf facilities, which turned out to be a profitable venture.

“We built one in Latvia, and then it became popular,” he says. “People were playing, and we started getting more offers to build miniature golf courses. It was a good business, but I was still trying to acquire information about building a regular golf course. We couldn’t make big money by just producing miniature golf courses, so we started doing other constructions jobs.”

ON THE RISE

In 1991, Latvia secured its independence from the Soviet Union and set up its own government. By then, Modo Riga was renovating buildings. Still, Gulans had his sights set on golf. In 1995, the company’s first international client invited Gulans and his associates to London to spend Christmas together.

“That was the first time I saw how a real golf course looked, what the meaning of a driving range was and how to set up a clubhouse,” he says. “I took my first golf lesson, and I liked it.”

Shortly after, in 1996, the first golf course in Russia opened – The Moscow City Club. While the facility was being built, Gulans visited the site to see how the course construction was coming along. In 1997, Modo Riga participated as an advisor/consultant at the first nine-hole golf course project, Viesturi, in Latvia. It was a small-budget project. After that, the scope of the company’s projects widened.

“Our first big job was in Latvia in 2000,” Gulans says. “We worked with American architect Rob Swedberg and owner Sandis Ozolinsh, an ice hockey player. He was the first owner who built a nice semiprivate 18-hole golf course in Riga.”

Modo Riga finished the Ozo Golf Club in 2002. During the project, Swedberg introduced Gulans to the reality of how a golf course was constructed – the drainage, an irrigation system with more than a thousand sprinkler heads, growing and maintaining grass, and maintaining equipment.

“It was a successful project,” Gulans says. “We built a clubhouse, maintenance building, roads and everything. The total budget, including the

clubhouse, was \$5 million, and we finished at \$4.8 million.”

When Gulans visited Swedberg in the U.S. in 2001, he attended the Golf Industry Show and its related seminars.

“It was interesting, and I haven’t missed one industry show since,” he says.

The next course Modo Riga built was in Estonia – the 27-hole Estonia Golf and Country Club. Estonia’s owner had visited the Ozo Golf Club and liked what he saw, so he called Gulans to build Estonia.

“We finished the project and made a profit,” he says. “We started buying construction machines and dozers. Since 2002, I started running just the golf construction side of Modo Riga.”

After Estonia, Gulans built the Salienu Golf Club in Jurmala, Latvia, which took two years, for Swedish owners. Then Modo Riga worked on the Nick Faldo International Golf Club in Moscow. From there Gulans went to work in Lithuania with Canadian architect Les Farber.

Gulans is currently working on that project, though it’s been halted temporarily. Modo Riga has completed nine holes – 27 holes are planned along with real estate (123 houses) surrounding the course.

“It’s the first golf project with real estate in Lithuania,” he says. “The owners are trying to sell part of the shares or maybe the whole project to different investors.”

Modo Riga also is working on a Greg Norman project in St. Petersburg, Russia. Gulans says the company has grown to 60 employees, which allows it to work on three projects at a time.

“My job is to be out in the market all the time to see what’s happening,” he says. “I know everything that’s happening in the Baltic States. There are a lot of projects on paper. But the real estate market has declined, so investors aren’t going to be risky at this time, so they’re just waiting to see what’s going to happen. We’re registered in Russia, and we’re watching what’s happening there, too.”

In this market, Modo Riga competes with German and Swedish construction companies, Gulans says.

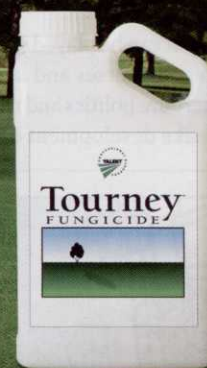
HUGE POTENTIAL

Gulans says there’s plenty of opportunity for him in underdeveloped Russia and the Baltic States to build golf courses. He says most of the development potential is in Russia by the Black

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Eastern Europe and Russia present growth opportunities for course development, Gulans says. Photo: Modo Riga

Sea because golf can be played year round there, there are no golf courses and land is available. However, there are politics and rules to abide by, which can make development difficult.

Owners aren't taking many risks because the real-estate market declined this summer, Gulans says. In Latvia, real estate prices declined about 54 percent in some segments.

"It's not the time to make a big investment in golf and real estate," he says. "Even so, there are four or five projects in the pipeline that haven't been started yet."

Despite the sluggish real estate market, Gulans sees a bright future for golf course development in Scandinavia, Eastern Europe and Russia.

"There has to be," he says, citing the following statistics:

- Around Stockholm, Sweden, the population is more than 1.5 million, and there are more than 50 golf courses.
- Around Copenhagen, Denmark, there are 30 golf courses.
- Around Helsinki, Finland, there are 16 golf courses.

• Riga's population is about 1 million, and there are only three golf courses.

• In Lithuania, with a population of more than 3 million people, there are just two golf courses.

• In Estonia, with a population of more than 1 million, there are three golf courses.

• There are 16 million people in Moscow, and there are three golf courses open.

• In St. Petersburg, with a population of 4 million, there are no golf courses, but one is being built.

• In southern Russia, in Sochi, which will host the 2014 Winter Olympics, there are no golf courses.

In addition to opportunities in Scandinavia and the Baltic region, the potential in Russia is huge.

"With a population more than 140 million, there are only three golf courses open," Gulans says. **GCI**

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