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## Creative Award Breakdown

**BUILDER:** Landscapes Unlimited

**PROJECT:** The Prairie Club, Valentine, Neb.

**COST:** \$5.8 million

**TERM:** May 12, 2008 to May 31, 2010

**ARCHITECT:** Graham Marsh (The Pines Course), Tom Lehman and Chris Brands (The Dunes Course)

**SUPERINTENDENT:** Ross Buckendahl

**NOTABLE NOTES:** Overcame location, staffing and timetable challenges to produce two world-class courses.



Lucky for him, however, his company was familiar with the H2B temporary worker program, where companies can secure workers from Mexico who are then allowed to work in the U.S. for eight months, then must go home for the remaining four months. Landscapes Unlimited has had as many as 450 H2B workers at one time, and for its Sutton Bay project in South Dakota used 40 workers for construction and 18 for existing maintenance.

“It has been a godsend to have these workers from Mexico that we’re so dependent on for the projects that we can get certified for H2B,” Kubly says. “It’s not doable for a lot of projects because the unemployment rate is so high, the government won’t allow us to bring these workers in and makes us use local labor instead.”

Club management was educated in all aspects of the H2B program including labor certification, employee recruitment and program compliance requirements. H2B employees interested in accepting employment as maintenance staff were assigned to project construction crews. This resulted in a “built-in” recruitment pool from which the superintendent would select and hire maintenance staff.

“The continuity created by transferring construction

Landscapes Unlimited used the natural resources of the Dunes Course to create a links-style course in comparison to the Pines Course.

## creative award winner 2011 Builder Excellence Awards

staff to maintenance staff allowed for a seamless transition of the course from contractor to owner," says Kubly.

Due to the remoteness of the site, off-site lodging for these employees was unavailable, so most of an entire hotel was rented out for

**"Both courses are very dramatic. They're different, but they blend well together and make for a great golfing experience."**

— Bill Kubly, Landscapes Unlimited

the duration of the project.

"We met with the proprietors early in the project to discuss our needs, and they were terrific to work with, even going as far as to provide our crews with special bilingual needs," says Kubly.

The remoteness of the site also provided some challenges as far as getting power to the site. Three-phase power was not available for the wells and pump station to meet the grassing timeframe, so generators were used during the maturation and grow-in of the courses until the town of Valentine was able to bring in three-phase power.

"This required daily maintenance and operation of this critical component," Kubly says.

High winds also didn't make for a picnic on this extensive and fast-paced project.

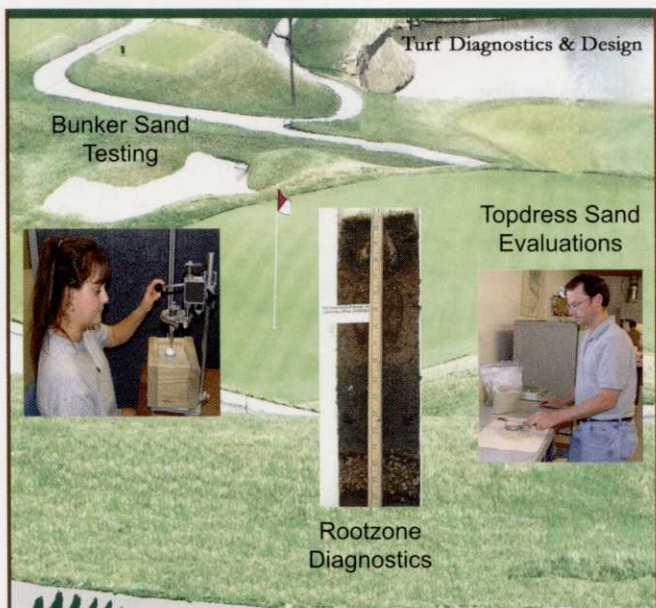
"When you're building things out of pure sand, the wind can come up and destroy what you've done that day, but mainly when it comes to grassing the course, there are a lot of days when it's so windy, if you try to seed it just blows all over the place," says Kubly. "If you're trying to plant different types of grasses on greens, for instance, you may have to wait two to three to four days before you can actually plant that seed. There's a lot of wind erosion."

Kubly says they didn't use much hydro-seeding or erosion blankets to combat the problem. As far as the blankets are concerned, he says the site was so vast they wouldn't have known where to start and stop them.

"The key was keeping the ground wet once you had the seed down, and then you probably had a six- to 10-day window to get the seed sprouted to hold the sand itself," he says. "On most courses, you would have only had the potential for that problem on the greens, but in this case, the whole course was built the same way. The same sand material that was in the greens and bunkers was also in the fairways and rough."

The wind also created problems with the irrigation system, says Rob Christie, who worked as construction superintendent on the site.

"The wind blew a lot of sand in the irrigation pond, and it was so fine that it got into the irrigation system and caused some heads to stick on," says Christie.



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Christie says the number-one problem in his opinion was clearing the prairie grass on the Dunes Course.

"Usually when you're shaping in you're destroying everything and coming back with clean dirt, but we weren't doing a lot of shaping," he says. "We were originally going to seed right into it but it just wasn't seedable. The root system was pretty intense, and when we went in there to till it up, it just brought up the roots so it turned into quite an ordeal."

Weather can often be a nemesis of a golf course construction project, causing massive delays. But that was at least one challenge those involved with The Prairie Club project were able to avoid. It's for that reason that Christie would not classify the project as one of the hardest he has worked on.

"Every project seems to have its own unique challenges," says Christie, "but on this one we didn't have a lot of rain days or weather challenges. We had a couple thunder-

storms but that was it. On our end, everything went pretty smoothly."

As far as difficulty, Kubly ranks Prairie Club in the top 10 percent of the 400 to 500 courses Landscapes Unlimited has built. But he says there were aspects of it that were easy, too.

"As difficult as parts of the job were, a lot of it was simpler," he says. "For example, we had none of the bureaucracy that you would encounter in some major U.S. cities in regard to wetland and erosion control. Since we were in the middle of nowhere, there were not nearly as many regulations."

One of the unique aspects of the project in Kubly's mind was the fact that it proved people are still spending money to develop remote golf courses even in tough economic times.

"At a time like this, people wonder how could a course work economically," he says. "But this developer had the guts to do it and proved, by picking two top architects, that he has a project out there that is very

successful. It puts little old Nebraska on the map as a great place for golf, and when you look at the three world-class courses there now in Sand Hills, Dismal River and now Prairie Club, who would ever have thought it would become one of the top golf meccas in the world?"

Accolades the course has already gotten include "Best New Course" in the world and "Overnight Destination of the Year" by Golf Digest, "Best New Courses of 2010" for the Dunes Course (#2) and "Best New Courses of 2010" for the Pines Course (#8) by Golf Magazine, and "Top 10 New Golf Destinations in the World" by Links magazine.

If those honors didn't get golfers' attention, then certainly the publicity campaign that owner Paul Schock spearheaded did.

In addition to creating a Facebook page and a posting a viral video on YouTube, the campaign netted more than 85 articles which generated more than 25.6 million impressions among serious golfers worldwide. **GCI**



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# From Wasteland to Wonderland

Eagle Golf Construction turned a former dumping ground into the gem of a community and a golf course worthy of professional tournament play. BY JASON STAHL

Garbage. Slag. Industrial waste. These are generally not the kinds of things you find on a golf course. Nor do you find drug dealers and prostitutes roaming about. But they were all present at the site of The Golf Club at Harbor Shores before it became a golf course so impressive it was named to host the 2012 and 2014 U.S. Senior PGA Championship.

"I would say that this was one of the greatest achievements of my life – next to the birth of my little girl," says E. Randal Pichan, president of Eagle Golf Construction.

Consider the challenges Pichan and his team faced: clean-up and restoration of the 540-acre "Brownfield Site," remediating poor soil conditions, dealing with permit and approval delays, working around endangered dunes plants, constructing a 13-mile piping system to collect the site's drainage run-off and fighting off a park preservation society that opposed the project.

Even though a park on the site had become a haven for pushers, some folks felt that it had historical significance given that it had been donated by an important local family in the early 1900s. Ultimately, golf won out and the parking lot became one of the course's holes. But Bob McFeeter of Evergreen Development Company restored the old park to an exact replica of what it used to be, and people started coming back to it.

Pichan recalls one elderly man he talked to who appeared lost while visiting the site.

"He said that he had been hearing about the project and that he and his wife had frequented the park back in the 1950s and had enjoyed the beach and the waterfront but had not been back since," says Pichan. "But he said to see what we had done reminded him of old times once again. So it was really good to hear from someone who appreciated our efforts."

BOTTOM: The Brownfield Site faced garbage and industrial waste before becoming The Golf Club at Harbor Shores. RIGHT: Washouts were covered with sod grown in nurseries on the driving range tees.





Local businesspeople also appreciated the radical makeover. One family that had owned the North Shore Inn restaurant – which Pichan says has the best burger in town – since the 1960s and kept the business open even through the bad times was thoroughly elated at seeing the area brought back to its former glory.

“In the early ’60s, factories lined the area, and they had beautifully manicured flower beds and lawns,” says Pichan. “The family said what we did with the course reminded them of that time when things were gorgeously landscaped.”

The public will now be able to take advantage of walking trails throughout the course and canoe or kayak down a river they never could before. The ultimate goal was to create a first-class resort course that would help revitalize a depressed and downtrodden community that had been in economic and social decline for more than 40 years.

Judging by the number of homes being built in the new development, which Pichan says are going up “left and right,” the project achieved that goal. But perhaps more important than the homes and the pure aesthetic beauty of their creation is the hard dollars they’ll give to three non-profit organizations: Cornerstone Alliance, an economic development entity; the Whirlpool Foundation, whose namesake company owned the property and a consortium of church and community welfare groups called The Alliance. They will receive \$30,000 annually, plus \$5,000 or 20 percent of annual net operating income – whichever is greater. The remaining 80 percent will go toward Community Benefits programming.

To get an idea of the amount of waste that existed on the site at the onset of the project, consider that 110,000 cubic yards of garbage and more than 5,000 tires were removed and properly disposed of at the local dump. Foundry waste was used beneath large fills in the mounding along 10 of the 18 holes. Most important was the eight to 12 inches of capping sand – 130,000 cubic yards – that was used over the entire course to seal off all the contaminants and protect golfers, a requirement of the EPA.

Pichan could not praise superintendent Brad Fry more for his finish work and grassing, calling him “one of the finest grow-in superintendents in the country.”

“I’ve never seen someone go after a course so aggressively, and it really made us shine,” says Pichan. “He didn’t wait – he jumped and attacked the washouts. He approached the job like a linebacker going after a running back. He just had a ‘get the job done,’ no-holds barred attitude.”

The washouts were replaced with sod from other parts of the course Fry knew he could grow back in. Two tees on the west end of the driving range were used and a tee on the east end was used as a nursery. It was replanted three to four times, with Fry stripping it off to use on fairways or tees or other areas that were deficient.

The construction process was so long that Fry had to maintain new turfgrasses through two winters. A blend of A1 and A4 bentgrasses were chosen for the greens, Dominant Plus bentgrass for tees and fairways, Kentucky bluegrass/fine fescue blend for playable roughs and a straight fine fescue mix for unplayable roughs. Entering the winter season, Fry’s crews mowed the greens, then covered some of them. He was able to mow 90 percent of the tees and fairways before winter, while the rest were treated with snow-mold applications.

Fry said the wind was extremely challenging when seeding.

“To combat the wind, we hydroseeded and used soil erosion blankets,” he says. “Working on the holes that were right next to Lake Michigan was extremely difficult.”

Working with the Jack Nicklaus Design team and associate Chris Rule was not intimidating, Fry says, but rather rewarding.

“I’ve worked with them before, so there was no intimidation factor there,” he says. “If anything, it was exciting.”

Pichan lauded Nicklaus Design as well.

“Having Nicklaus attached to the project drove it and made things happen,” he says. “He’s the best, until he gets dethroned. He’s just a superb man, and he made things happen where other people cannot or have a hard time doing it.”

Nicklaus Design’s Chris Rule returned praise to Eagle Construction, “There were an extreme amount of construction challenges, and Eagle Golf stayed the course and was an integral part of creating a special golf course,” he says.

Irrigation of the course was one of the challenges, particularly finding a suitable water source. According to Mike Kuhn, the irrigation consultant who worked on the project, southeastern and southwestern Michigan have issues with high salt content in the groundwater. Creating irrigation ponds was out of the question because there wasn’t enough acreage. The ponds they did excavate were unsuitable due to the soil quality and not knowing how it might affect the water. So

### Affinity Award Breakdown

**BUILDER:** Eagle Golf Construction

**PROJECT:** The Golf Club at Harbor Shores, Benton Harbor, Mich.

**COST:** \$12.1 million

**TERM:** September 2007 to June 2010

**ARCHITECT:** Jack Nicklaus, Jack Nicklaus Design

**SUPERINTENDENT:** Brad Fry

**NOTABLE NOTES:** Transformed a neglected, contaminated, environmentally-sensitive and challenging property into a first-class golf course.



The team embraced the environmental challenges of the native plants, naming the holes after them and posting helpful information for players in the golf carts.

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— E. Randal Pichan,  
Eagle Golf Construction

they ended up pumping water directly from the Paw Paw River.

“It was one of the hardest tasks we had,” says Kuhn. “Getting the necessary permits took the better part of a year, and we also had issues with zebra mussels, which forced us to take preventative measures to keep them out.”

The irrigation pump station is a vertical

turbine variable speed prefabricated system capable of pumping 1,800 gallons per minute at 120 lbs. per square inch of pressure. The submerged intake is screened and positioned in order to prevent fish, including young sturgeon, vegetation and sediment from entering the intake line. The design process for the intake pipe, says Kuhn, took a long time and lots of engineering.

“Typical velocities in our intake are one to three feet per second,” Kuhn explains. “For this one, we used a 26-inch high density polyethylene intake pipe that we had to drill a series of holes in, and the holes had to be a certain size and spaced out a certain distance to keep our velocities under .25 feet per second so as to not to draw in any fish, even young fish.”

The state-of-the-art, fully-automated irrigation system consists of 1,606 sprinklers, electrically-activated control valves and a controller and central control system that minimizes overwatering. Eighty acres of turfgrass are irrigated, while 130 acres of fine

fescue unmaintained areas are not.

Each hole was named after a native plant growing on it: For example, No. 1 hole is named Aster and the hole at No. 2 is named Rose Pink. Rose-pink, in addition to wild sweet potato and swamp rose mallow, were species that the State of Michigan was particularly concerned about.

Certain areas on each hole were highlighted with selective clearing, additional plantings and continued maintenance to draw more attention from golfers to the native plant species. Literature is posted in every golf cart to notify golfers of environmentally-sensitive areas. Plus, as part of his greeting, the starter explains where these areas are to golfers as well.

And what better way to officially open the course than with a skins game between legends Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Tom Watson and Johnny Miller – with the highlight being \$3 million donated by the golfers and the Whirlpool Foundation to the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. **GCI**

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# The not-so Big Easy

Duininck Golf overcame a litany of logistical challenges to resurrect a historic golf course destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.

BY ROB THOMAS

Mother Nature can be very unforgiving. Forget about winter coming early or a wet spring that delays the start of a season. When Hurricane Katrina roared through the Gulf of Mexico and devastated much of New Orleans, the weather became a matter of life and death, not just rounds lost.

When the Big Easy's levee system failed the morning of Aug. 29, 2005, Joseph M. Bartholomew Sr. Golf Course was one of the casualties. With more than 1,800 people losing their lives in the hurricane and subsequent flooding, golf was just an afterthought. But once the city and citizens began picking up the pieces of their lives and returning to normalcy, recreation came back into view.

Bartholomew Golf Course had a storied past before Katrina, dating back to the 1950s. At a time of segregation in the United States,

the course – originally nine holes and a part of Pontchartrain Park – was developed by the city and opened for use by African Americans in 1956. In 1979, the course was named after Joe Bartholomew, who designed and built the course, and was its first golf professional.

While Duinick Golf is being recognized with Golf Course Industry's Heritage Award for its work starting in July 2009, in restoring this part of New Orleans history, the builder was originally onsite in 2005.

Duinick was first contracted to cap three fairways with plating sand, rebuild tees, repair irrigation and grass the work. This was completed and turned over to the city that summer. New Orleans was set to reopen the course, along with a renovated clubhouse and various improvements, when Hurricane Katrina struck.

The course sat underwater





for weeks while the city was being pumped out and an initial cleanup was done by FEMA. Bartholomew laid vacant for nearly four years. On July 7, 2009, with architect Garrett Gill's designs in hand, Duinick Golf broke ground on the reconstruction of Joseph M. Bartholomew Sr. Municipal Golf Course.

The Pontchartrain neighborhood still bears the signs of destruction. Gill and Duinick's objective was to reconstruct the entire golf course to a similar routing plan and have it completed for a spring 2011 opening, which would help revitalize the economy.

"Joseph Bartholomew was a combination of renovation and rebuild," says Judd Duinick. "Garrett Gill did an incredible job of salvaging as much of the original design as he could. The basic routing was reused and features in the same locations. With the numerous aged live oaks and cypress that lined the course, there wasn't much room for change."

Gill, who worked closely with Kelly Gibson, a lifetime member

of the PGA Tour and native of New Orleans, focused on and reused some of the unique features that were on site such as "Bird Island," according to Duinick. New green complexes and bunker features were developed, and a few tee locations changed to accommodate today's technology.

"The intent was to preserve the strategy and characteristics of the Bartholomew routing," Gill says. "We were fortunate that characteristics of the course were preserved."

Following Katrina, Gibson began a passionate pursuit to involve himself in the "rebirth" of his hometown.

"It's important for me that I give back to the community that served me throughout my career," he says. "New Orleans has an opportunity to become a golf destination post-Katrina."

Gibson also was instrumental in the design of an elaborate First Tee facility at Bartholomew.

As the news repeated in the days and weeks following Katrina, New Orleans sits below sea level. Drainage and irrigation mainline excavations were

### Heritage Award Breakdown

**BUILDER:** Duinick Golf

**PROJECT:** Joseph M. Bartholomew, Sr. Municipal Golf Course Reconstruction, New Orleans, La.

**COST:** \$7.7 million

**TERM:** July 7, 2009 to Oct. 27, 2010

**ARCHITECT:** Garrett Gill, Gill Design Inc.

**SUPERINTENDENT:** Pete Carew

**NOTABLE NOTES:** Reconstructed a devastated course to its original design, with improvements, all while keeping to Joseph Bartholomew's original vision. A true Katrina success story for New Orleans.

into the water table and had to be dewatered continually. Lake level connector pipes needed to be raised, which saved the owner on the lengths of pipe needed. An additional laborer was added to the crew to aid in the production, which enabled the crew to install and get backfilled quicker.

Because soil conditions were unacceptable for building a golf

course, the dirt was laid out in lifts. Long-reach excavators were needed to dredge existing ponds and Marukas – a track-type dump truck – was used to haul dirt to features. A good, sandy soil was found in a few areas on the course, which were graded first, allowing the drainage, greens construction and irrigation crews to continue work and get these



The Joseph M. Bartholomew Sr. Municipal Golf Course was devastated by Hurricane Katrina, but Duinick Golf rebuilt the course, helping the local community and economy to heal.

## heritage award winner 2011 Builder Excellence Awards

holes nearly completed while the dirt was drying on the other areas.

"Soils in New Orleans are definitely the toughest soils we have encountered," Duinck says. "Harris Duinck, one of the senior partners in our company was on a project we had in New Orleans with me one day and says: 'Judd, if we come out of this project making any money you can say that you have accomplished something, as I haven't seen conditions this tough as long as I have been around the business, and that is over 50 years.'

"Having built courses in New Orleans in the past there is one thing you need, and that is patience," Judd Duinck adds. "The dirt

a deal that provided the correct amount of material for to the project at a price that met the expected budget.

The original start date of April 1, 2009, was moved back a month, then to July 7. Much of the prime earthmoving months were lost and a spring 2011 opening faced the team. Despite subcontracting issues and an average annual rainfall of 86 inches, the course needed to be shaped in time for the ideal sprigging period of March and April. Duinck adds personnel during the winter months while colder-climate projects were shut down.

"Despite the late award, our construction superintendent, Ahren Habicht, and his

Though the project started July 7, the first month's work was not paid in full until around Thanksgiving. A local construction attorney was used to consult with for advice on how to get payment out of the city, which resulted in action being taken by MWH Management and the City of New Orleans. Money was ultimately paid.

Because of the poor soil conditions, haul roads were constructed out of plating sand to allow trucks to maneuver through the site. In addition to sand for each hole, which was calculated in advance, these haul roads were used to bring in concrete for cart paths and greensmix for tees and greens. In areas that were too difficult to maneuver trucks, dump carts were utilized to add the needed materials.

"Getting materials into the features and concrete to the cart paths is always a challenge in New Orleans. Joe Bartholomew was no exception," Duinck says. "Dump carts and Marukas got quite a bit of use.

"As far as easier, it was great to have PGA pro Kelly Gibson on the Gill design team," he adds. "With Kelly living in New Orleans, we were able to get design decisions made quickly."

A prolonged dispute between the city and power company forced Duinck to go without power for more than five months at the beginning of the project. While Duinck was able to complete work not requiring power (much of the irrigation system was completed and only needed to be flushed and programmed when power was established), grassing the course was in serious jeopardy. Once power was provided and a pump station installed and operational, grassing was fast tracked from a schedule of 104 days to just 61.

"In the history of golf courses, this little construction window is just a small blip," Gill says. "We're extremely proud of the project and proud of the City of New Orleans for caring about it. It was a remarkable effort and I think golfers will find it a remarkable course to play."

Duinck concurs.

"We as a company are so proud of how the Joseph Bartholomew course finished out," Duinck says. "Garrett Gill, Jon Schmenk, and Kelly Gibson did a fabulous job of tailoring this course to fit the property and the needs of the community. The course is going to be a real anchor, and hopefully rejuvenate the historic Gentilly community of New Orleans." **GCI**

**"Having built courses in New Orleans in the past there is one thing you need, and that is patience."**

— Judd Duinck, Duinck Golf



moves slow and dries slow. In other parts of the world a golf course contractor can use large excavators, scrapers and haul trucks. In New Orleans you get to use Marukas with a half load on them. Like they say, 'patience is a virtue.'"

Finding qualified contractors to meet the Disadvantage Business Enterprise requirements was difficult for Duinck. An earthmoving subcontractor had to be replaced and their work was completed by Duinck to keep on schedule. The additional costs were not anticipated, but had to be assumed.

The first cap sand contractor had to be replaced, as well. Spot checks on truckloads of sand were coming up short of what was billed. Considering more than 50,000 cubic yards of sand was used, losing more than a cubic yard of sand with each truck would have led to a shortage of more than \$75,000 worth of material. Duinck tapped a prior relationship with a contractor and negotiated

team did an outstanding job of fast-tracking the schedule. We were still able to successfully plant the course over the summer and grow it in for a fall turnover to the City of New Orleans," Duinck says. "With the city having a construction management firm to manage all of the reconstruction projects in New Orleans, and funds coming from three different sources – FEMA, City Block Grant Funds and Capital Projects – getting any requested changes through the system took longer than anticipated."

Throughout the process, Duinck Golf was to report to one individual – the construction manager for the City of New Orleans. From the pre-bid to final acceptance, five different project managers were assigned to the project. Gill and Habicht were diligent in keeping accurate communications and Habicht would spend hours getting each new construction manager up to speed, which kept the project moving forward.