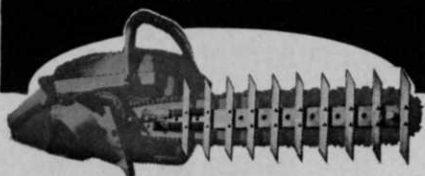
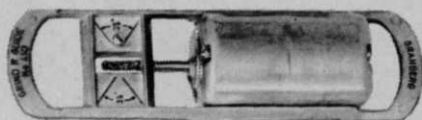


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Surge In Construction Marks West Central Golf Course Outlook

By **GEORGE KERR**
West Central Facility
Development Consultant
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George Kerr

THE PAST year was very slow by comparison with respect to official golf course openings in the West Central Region. Weather played a big part and usually at the wrong time. It was either too hot after planting with no moisture to assist irrigation systems, or it was too wet for the construction crews to move dirt with their machinery. As a result, our figures reflect the fact that only 24 courses opened in the NGF fiscal year, for this region.

It must be pointed out though that 1973 will be a banner year with respect to official golf course openings. At this time, there are 99 courses in some phase of construction between moving dirt and maturing turf prior to opening.

Of the 24 courses that opened, 20 were regulation length, one was of executive length and three were considered Par-3 facilities.

Texas is the leader on number of courses open during the past year with seven, while there are 35 facilities under construction. All but two of those under construction are considered in east or south Texas.

Colorado interests continue to build new golf layouts and it appears that several will be built in the mountains as soon as the weather permits. Mountain courses generally take longer to build because of the short season, but the vistas and panoramas available on a mountain course are truly worth waiting for.

One of the courses recently opened in the foothills of the Rockies at Larkspur, Colorado is Perry Park designed by Richard Phelps of Phelps-Brauer & Associates, Denver. Recently, superintendent John Ford

hosted a most successful monthly meeting of the Rocky Mountain GCSA. John is now actively engaged in "bringing in" another nine holes, which should be ready for play next summer.

Another foothills course closer to Denver is Roxborough Park, designed by Robert Trent Jones, Jr. Superintendent Gordon Brinkworth was kept busy bringing in 18 holes of new turf until the snow arrived. The course winds through natural formations of rock and trees, and should be ready for play next summer.

The Pinery at Parker, Colorado is presently building 27 holes with Purr-Wick greens. David Bingaman designed the golf facility and is building it with Jack Maurer, superintendent. Both men have had prior experience with the Purr-Wick system. The Pinery is now owned by the Club Corporation of America.

All the aforementioned golf facilities have been designed to compliment the sale of real estate surrounding the golf course and adjacent environs.

Of the 35 courses under construction in Texas, almost 75 percent of these are because of real estate developments.

The Houston area is a fine exponent of real estate golf projects. Diamondhead Corporation is building "Newport," a 6000-acre resort type community on the east shore of Lake Houston. The master plan provides for three 18 hole courses, two marinas, riding stables, swim and tennis club, plus numerous other amenities.

The Kingwood Country Club will be built on the opposite or west

shore of Lake Houston. The Friendswood Development Company and the Club Corporation of America are cooperating in this venture. Joseph S. Finger, golf course architect from Houston, designed three 18 hole layouts for Kingwood. The club and its golf courses will be patterned after the highly successful Brookhaven Country Club in Dallas. The courses will be designed to play from 5500 yards to 7100 yards, all with pars of 72. The most difficult course will be reserved for men only. The middle course will be open to all players with handicaps of 20 or better. The third course will be open to all players with no handicap requirement. Several holes will front on Lake Houston.

The Folsom Investment Company of Dallas, Texas has taken on a new project which will be adjacent to the Preston Trails Country Club. This new multi-million dollar golf-real estate venture will be known as Bent Tree Country Club. Designer Desmond Muirhead is working with builder Keith Dewar in this development.

Last, but not least, several municipal projects are going strong. Jay Riviere of Houston, designed and built a second 18 holes for Dick Forester et al at Bear Creek on the west side of Houston. This course will be ready to play this spring, weather permitting.

The Richardson, Texas municipal golf course, which was five years in planning, should be ready to open this year. Leon Howard of Austin, Texas did the design work while the Gunderson's of Rapid City, South Dakota did the final two finishing phases of construction. "Buster" Creagh will be the head professional and Mike Lasoya is the Supt. in charge. R. B. Sherrill, City Manager, did a lot of legwork before this project got off the ground. He visited many of the more successful municipal golf operations as far away as Fairfax County, Virginia.

Because of the prior planning and incorporation of successful ideas, the Richardson Muni-facility is truly first class and will rate among the finest. The site is an old horse pasture with many established trees as high as 40 feet. Present clubhouse plans feature cart storage in the basement or lower level. All indicators point to a highly successful operation, as there is a definite need for more municipal golf facilities in the suburbs of a large metroplex such as Dallas—Fort Worth.

Dallas has recognized the need for additional municipal golf facilities and has incorporated needs and

desires into a comprehensive Green Belt Program. Grover Keeton, supt. of special activities for the Parks and Recreation Dept. reflected that several golf courses are in the long range plans for the Green Belt and other areas.

Oklahoma City broke ground on a new 36 hole facility early this year. The Earlywine Park project will be a total recreational complex encompassing all forms of outdoor activities. Floyd Farley designed the golf courses for this new municipal park.

The South Suburban Recreational

District will open a new 27 hole muni golf course early next summer. The SSRD is located in Littleton, Colorado a suburb of Denver. The facility, designed by Phelps-Brauer of Denver, will include 18 holes of regulation length play, plus a Par-3 nine. The course should be ready to open early this summer.

1973 promises to be an exciting year with many course openings and ground breaking ceremonies. Hopefully, this surge in construction will begin to accommodate golfers who flock to the links each year in ever increasing numbers □

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