

NEWS RELEASE:

Kemper Sports named to operate Chambers Creek Golf Course



Pierce County Executive John W.

Ladenburg has announced that Kemper Sports Management of Northbrook, Ill., will operate the Chambers Creek Golf Course. Kemper Sports also operates the highly successful Bandon Dunes Golf Resort on the Oregon coast.

Ladenburg chose Kemper Sports over Troon Golf of Scottsdale, Ariz., on the recommendation of a review committee that interviewed representatives of both firms. The course operator selection completes a consultant team that includes golf course architect Robert Trent Jones II of Palo Alto, Calif., engineer Berger Abam of Federal Way and clubhouse architect Miller/Hull Partnership of Seattle.

"This was the last piece needed for a team to design, build and operate a world-class destination golf course that will be an economic development and tourism promotion tool for the Pierce County community," Ladenburg said.

While Pierce County isn't trying to build another Bandon Dunes, the county does expect to benefit from Kemper Sports' development marketing and operational expertise. Bandon Dunes Resort is privately owned and consists of two 18-hole courses, both highly ranked by national golf magazines, with a third course under construction.

Steven H. Lesnik, co-founder and president, said Kemper Sports will bring operational and marketing expertise to the team. "Our perspective will be to help the team look at the practical and operating implications of their decisions," he said. "Will those decisions be consistent with our goal to one day host a national tournament of some type? Is the team making the kind of decisions that will lead veteran amateur golfers, professional players and knowledgeable golf media to respect and want to experience what we've developed here?"

Kemper will hire a general manager six months to a year prior to opening, which is scheduled for May 2007. The golf course superintendent will join the team for the grow-in period several months prior to opening.

Lesnik said his firm was attracted to the Chambers Creek project in part by the world-class vision expressed by Ladenburg and his county team in the Request for Proposals. "There is an aspiration for greatness. It's one thing to have an aspiration and another thing to achieve that. I think Pierce County's goal to have one of the most well-known and highly regarded municipal golf courses in the country is legitimate and realistic," he said.

"I admire Chambers Creek's goal to join Bethpage on Long Island, Torrey Pines in San Diego and Harding Park in San Francisco in the top group of public golf venues," Lesnik

said. Besides its owner's vision, Chambers Creek offers an outstanding site and the designer to make it a "must play" golf destination. Lesnik and his associates walked the site this week and liked what they saw.

"You have a great piece of property. The northern half of the site has some natural tee and green sites, with wonderful water views, that the Jones firm can work with to make beautiful golf holes," he said.

Lesnik has worked with many golf architects and is a personal friend of a few, including Bobby Jones Jr., principal of the RTJ2 firm. "The thing I think is so good about Bobby's work is that it not only is highly regarded but also that people like to play his courses. Fifteen years ago the mantra in the golf industry was 'Let's see how hard we can make them.' Today, consistent with Jones' philosophy, people are saying, 'Let's have players of all handicap ability be able to see the landing areas and greens, and let's make the course fun to get around in a reasonable amount of time and still have great shot values from every set of tees.' At the same time, in order to someday attract a national event, we need to have a course that from the back tees, with the greens firmed and the pins tucked, would provide a formidable challenge for the best players in the world," he said.

"Kemper will immediately begin work with the consultant team members in preparing three conceptual golf course project master plans for review by the county and general public. The county is scheduled to unveil the plans at an evening public open house Sept. 27 at the Pierce County Environmental Services Building in University Place overlooking the golf course site. Detailed design of the golf course is scheduled to be completed by July 2005.

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