

Golf Business & Real Estate

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Pop star **Michael Jackson** might be dead but his legacy will continue to live in Gary, Ind., if a proposed golf and entertainment complex is developed by the Jackson family. Gary Mayor **Rudy Clay** and the singer's father, **Joe Jackson**, announced plans for the Jackson Family Center, which will include a museum, performing arts center, hotel and golf course. The Jackson Family Foundation will build the entertainment complex in stages and estimates the initial cost being \$300 million. Gary is the Jackson family's hometown.

The PGA Tour is positioning itself to take over operations of publicly owned Harding Park this summer and add the '09 Presidents Cup course to the Tour's Tournament Players Club network. The San Francisco Recreation & Park Department, which owns Harding Park, recently approved a proposal to hand over clubhouse and golf management to the PGA Tour but details still need to be negotiated. If the deal closes, the Tour won't assume management until at least Aug. 22, when the city's existing agreement with KemperSports expires. The Tour has agreed to waive the standard management fee — KemperSports received \$192,000 annually — and market the course as TPC Harding Park. Under the new arrangement, Recreation and Park spokesman **Elton Pon** said the city expects to save about \$250K per year and still be the host site of the Champions Tour Schwab Cup.

Tom Lehman is one step closer to having his latest design effort come to fruition in West Fargo, N.D. Developer **Jim Bullis** appears to have financing in place for the 18-hole, par-72 course that will be open to the public as part of Westport Beach development. Bullis wants to start work this summer with nine of the holes being built and seeded by the fall and the other nine completed next spring. The Lehman layout could open by the end of the 2011 golf season. If this project does pencil, it will be the ninth 18-hole regulation-size course in the Fargo-Moorhead-Oxbow-Mapleton area, and the first in West Fargo.

Pete Davison is back managing high-end private clubs with the ink just drying on a three-year deal to manage Raveneaux Country club near Houston. After 25 years of managing the PGA Tour's TPC Network and retiring from the business, Davison's started Sage Golf Group Worldwide. The three-year deal covers an 18-hole course designed by **Robert Von Hagge** in 1979, 12 lighted outdoor tennis courts, junior Olympic-sized pool and 60,000-s.f. clubhouse that is fresh off a \$2 million renovation. Raveneaux is located in Spring, Tex., and owned by JP Realty Partners, a diversified commercial real estate developer and investor. Sage Golf Group is looking at securing other third-party management deals while several new golf course development projects slowly go through their approval.

Troon Golf's **Jim McLaughlin** landed a new high-profile third-party contract with Pronghorn, a 36-hole private resort community in Bend, Ore. Facing continued operational challenges, Pronghorn managing member **Tom Hix** decided it was time to bring in a large professional third-party manager like Troon to leverage its vast resources and bring economic efficiencies to his private resort community. Pronghorn, which features two courses designed by **Jack Nicklaus** and **Tom Fazio**, will be managed by Troon Prive, the company's growing private club division. Pronghorn is an amenity-rich club community, featuring a recently announced PGA Tour Academy, established Private Residence Club, clubhouse and spa and Camp Pronghorn facility for families.

After subsidizing their high-end municipal course last fiscal year with about \$300K, City of Yorba Linda officials are on track meet this year's rounds and revenue budget at Black Gold Golf Course. Interim director of parks and recreation **Steve Rudometkin** anticipates doing a little more than 50,000 rounds and just under \$5.4 million in gross revenue for the fiscal period ending June 30. Next year's budget calls for 52,000 rounds and almost \$5.7 million in revenue. Black Gold, managed by KemperSports since it opened in 2001, actually would have had a balanced budget for the current fiscal year if it weren't for an ongoing turfgrass renovation. Black Gold is in the process of swapping out its ryegrass fairways for a more heat-tolerant kuku turfgass species.