

John Deere Golf Gives ‘Landmark Property’ Designation to Iowa Great Lakes Golf Resort in Spirit Lake and Dickinson County, Iowa

SPIRIT LAKE, Iowa (2010) — Benskin Developers Inc. / Iowa Great Lakes Development Division, the developers and visionaries behind the **Iowa Great Lakes Golf Resort**, announced today that **John Deere Golf / Van Wall Group** have entered into an agreement that recognizes the project to be built next year as a “Landmark Property.” The designation underscores the quality of the design and construction of the 18-hole championship course and its accompanying active lifestyle residential community.

Iowa Great Lakes Golf Resort golf course, a 230-acre championship public daily-fee golf course, is the only Iowa golf course community to make the Landmark list and is currently only one of 21 in the world to receive the designation. John Deere Golf Landmark Properties represent an elite group of world class resorts, clubs and communities that have embarked on a long-term supplier relationship with John Deere Golf for their complete golf course and property maintenance solutions. These select properties enjoy a menu of products and services that are unparalleled in the industry today. Construction of the golf course is scheduled to begin in early 2010 and is expected to be completed by the end of 2011.

In Iowa, John Deere may be best-known for its signature green and yellow tractors and combines as well as supporting equipment used in farming the state’s fertile soil, but the Fortune 100 Company is also the world’s largest supplier of products and services to the golf, sports turf and green industry.

“John Deere Golf’s Landmark Property designation sends a message about the caliber of this course and community to golfers and real estate buyers across the country,” said Alex Benskin, a partner in Benskin Development with his father, Marty Benskin. “Receiving this kind of recognition and support will help put Iowa Great Lakes Golf Resort on the map. The cachet of the John Deere name and reputation will be a huge asset in attracting golfers, real estate buyers, and will provide a venue for regional and national golf tournaments.”

A key advantage of receiving the Landmark designation beyond the national recognition is that John Deere will internally recognize the Iowa Great Lakes Golf Resort as one of its preferred corporate golf locations. As a result, the resort will have enhanced visibility for attracting company award recognition ceremonies, regional and national corporate meetings, as well as vendor, customer and dealer meetings.

“The Landmark Property relationship provides exceptional products and services to a select group of elite golf resort properties,” said Don Van Houweling, president of the Van Wall Group, one of the most significant John Deere dealer organizations in the Midwest. “We’re excited to add the Iowa Great Lakes Resort to this exclusive list and look forward to getting the project underway.”

Additionally, Iowa Great Lakes Golf will use John Deere technology, services and products, including irrigation systems and the full line of green products in the construction and maintenance of the course. Benskin added that the affiliation with John Deere completes what he describes as “the dream team” of golf course community development, construction and management.

Nicklaus Design, a firm started by golf great Jack Nicklaus, will design the course, and the developers selected Weitz Golf, the largest in the industry, to build the course and clubhouse.

Troon Golf, which is the world's largest golf management company overseeing operations at properties in 31 states and 26 countries, will manage the golf course as well as food and beverage operations. Iowa Great Lakes will benefit from Troon Golf's professional management expertise and elite loyalty programs currently experienced across its worldwide portfolio of golf facilities.

“Bringing together the best team and their brands has been central to our vision of what Iowa Great Lakes Golf Community will be,” Benskin said. “Assembling the best in design, development, construction and management took a little more time, but we believe the final product will be worth the wait.”

More Than Golf, An Active Lifestyle Community

Iowa Great Lakes Lifestyle Center Golf Resort serves as the centerpiece of a 528-acre active lifestyle development encompassing retail, residential and entertainment. In tandem with preparing for the golf course construction, Benskin is in the process of finalizing plans to move forward in late spring or early summer 2010 with construction of a model complex that will consist of a community clubhouse, four low-density, one-story condominium homes and three detached patio homes.

“The John Deere Landmark designation extends to the residential component of our project as well,” said Glen N. Maddox Jr., CEO of Iowa Great Lakes Development Division. “The John Deere Landmark Property endorsement allows us to build awareness of Iowa Great Lakes Golf Resort among John Deere’s current and former employees, customers, vendors, dealers and other affiliates estimated at approximately 250,000. It’s a real boost in reaching an interested market of prospective golf players and real estate buyers.”

The residential building plans for the maintenance-free villages will be provided by one of the nation’s top home-building franchisors. The one story condominiums and detached patio homes will be 100-percent maintenance-free for homeowners and will be located in “villages” throughout the project. The golf course, clubhouse and the estimated 900-plus residential units will be constructed by Weitz Golf International, the world’s largest golf course and clubhouse builder.

Benskin Developers Inc., based in Des Moines, Iowa, started work on Iowa Great Lakes Lifestyle Center in 2005. The multi-faceted project, which includes commercial, retail and hospitality, sits on 528 acres at the Iowa Great Lakes, a chain of 5 glacier-carved lakes covering 15,000 acres in Northwest Iowa. West Okoboji, the centerpiece of the lakes, is one of only 3 blue water lakes in the world- providing for incredibly crisp and beautiful water.