

RENOVATION

Country club undergoes \$1.5 million-plus renovation on current facilities

Construction expands banquet reception capacity to 500 guests

By Leslee Bassman

Eight years ago, River Place Country Club was struggling to maintain its position in the private club market, said Steven Held, president of Dominion Golf Group, which owns the club. Since then, the Four Points club has focused more on economical, family-based events for its members, including \$5 burger Sundays, kids-eat-free Wednesdays, as well as increased tennis and golf offerings.

As a result, the club's everyday programs and privately catered events soon became crowded affairs. In March the club began a renovation project, investing over \$1.5 million to expand its current dining, banquet and fitness facilities.

"We were originally going to freshen up the club with paint and carpet," Held said. "The fact was that our existing physical plant wasn't serving our needs—our grill was too small, and the personal training and fitness center usage was so large that it negatively impacted member accessibility."

Phase I of construction is almost complete. The club's main banquet area, the Hill Country Room, now opens up to

include the old, adjacent meeting spaces for better flow and greater capacity, Held said. The new hall can now accommodate 500 people for a reception or seat 350 guests, an increase from the room's previous seating capacity of 280 guests.

"As the golf program grew, adults were coming in to have drinks at the bar, and families were coming in for dinner," Held said. "Each segment of our membership was growing. We had to have a separate place for adults to dine and a gathering place for families."

In phases II and III, the meeting room wing of the club's upstairs is scheduled to be renovated into a state-of-the-art fitness club with a designated entrance, Held said. Both locker rooms are planned to be completely remodeled with the ladies' spa moved to the lower level, he said.

Downstairs, the golf pro shop was relocated adjacent to the current fitness area that is planned to be extended into an adult-only grill and lounge. New furnishings throughout the club are expected.

Design firm Thiel and Thiel Inc. and Austin general contractor Structura Inc.



The River Place Country Club's banquet area seats 350 guests after recent improvements.



The Four Points—area club is renovating its fitness and member dining sections.



are overseeing the renovations.

Held, who anticipates a late summer completion of the project, said that club members will not see an additional assessment for the renovation in their monthly bills. However, fitness member dues are scheduled to go up by \$15 as operational costs increase with the opening of the larger facility.

"The financial impact of this renovation lies with the addition, the draw, of

new members," Held said. "Our company policy is that we don't have dues increases to cover capital improvements."

Along with the new facilities, Held is adding a personal favorite to the menu and bringing in Saccone's Pizza to serve in-house and for local delivery.

"Our new fitness center, restaurant, banquet facilities, and even offering pizza, support our goal of enhancing the lifestyle of families in our community," Held said.

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