



Golf course is set to open next summer

Anne Krueger - The San Diego Union - Tribune • Aug 23, 2003

LAKESIDE -- On land where farmers once harvested hay and vegetables, developers are planning to build a \$25 million golf course.

The El Capitan Golf Club off El Monte Road is expected to open next summer, with a 20,000-square-foot clubhouse and two 18-hole courses.

The 14-member partnership developing the course held a ceremonial groundbreaking Thursday to mark the culmination of 12 years of planning and obtaining government approval for the enterprise. "When I got into this, I was a young guy," Ray Ferro, managing partner, joked at the ceremony.

The golf course will be developed on 480 acres being leased from the Helix Water District. Helix has owned the property since the early 1900s, when it was the site for the district's water wells.

When the water treatment plant opened in 1965, the wells were no longer needed, and the land was leased to farmers who grew hay, vegetables and other crops, said

Mark Weston, Helix general manager. But leases dwindled as farming became less profitable, he said.

The golf course lease calls for the water district to eventually receive 11 percent of sales, which could mean as much as \$1 million a year in income for the district, Weston said. Weston said groundwater will be used for irrigation. If the water table drops below a certain level,

the course developers will purchase water from Helix.



Bill Adams, a managing partner for the developers, said one course is expected to open next summer, with the second opening a year to 18 months later. The facility will employ about 100 people, he said. Adams said an equestrian trail will be located on the south side of the course, after

area horse riders requested it.

Richard Hensle, a member of the Lakeside planning group, said he hopes the golf course will attract visitors who will then learn about other recreational activities in Lakeside, such as climbing nearby El Capitan mountain.