

Business is booming

Central Oregon golf courses are busier than ever as the pandemic winds down

BY SCOTT BARTON • For The Bulletin

For more than a year now, Central Oregonians have seen their lives change due to COVID-19. From restrictions on gathering in public, to having children unable to attend school for much of the last 12 months, life as normal has been redefined.

Considering how much realities have changed, area residents have taken even more to outdoor activities as an escape. Attendance has been up in the area's many campsites, trails are seeing increased use — and Central Oregon golf courses are busier than they have been in years.

Local private clubs including Bend Golf Club, Broken Top, and Awbrey Glen have all reached full membership capacity.

“Joining Broken Top was a great decision,” said Jason Scarlett, a new member in 2020. “Having a community to share outdoor recreation with in a time of uncertainty has been a welcomed reprieve. The only challenge has been finding a

tee time because the course is so busy.”

Tee times aren't hard to come by at just private clubs. The same story seems to hold true at public courses where everyone is welcome. While business is booming, there are some in-



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

Bill Swancutt replaces the flag after his group finished putting while playing at Aspen Lakes Golf Course in Sisters last month.

herent challenges for everyone involved.

“I have an annual pass at River's Edge and find myself having to call days ahead to get a preferred tee time,” said Steve Nelson, a longtime course regular. “Last year, unless you had

a tee time before 11 a.m., it was difficult to get a single occupancy cart on what isn't the most walker-friendly course. The staff has been more than accommodating and I can't thank them enough for their help. Unfortunately, they were

limited in their ability to handle traffic last year when only one player was allowed in a cart.”

Despite some challenges, both private and public facilities are prospering.

See **Business** / 5