

Monday, June 27, 2005

# THE HUTCHINSON NEWS

online edition

Community Page      Lottery Numbers      Newspaper in Education      Search      Subscribe      Featured Ads

**FRONT PAGE**

**LOCAL**

**Briefs**

**Transcript**

**FIRST HOUR**

**REGIONAL**

**OPINION**

**OBITUARIES**

**SPORTS**

**CLASSIFIED**

**SPECIAL**

**SECTIONS**

**PAST ISSUES**

**CONTACT US**

[Available carrier routes](#)

 [Printer friendly page](#)

 [Send this page to a friend](#)

## Sod work begins as golf course nears completion

By Sarah Hill

An oddly shaped tractor was hard at work Friday afternoon near the 14th hole of the Cottonwood Hills golf course.

Its task: unrolling 48-inch rolls of sod onto their very particular places between the native Kansas grasses that remain on the course and the newly-built greens, tees and fairways.

Laying the sod marks the beginning of the end for the construction of the course. About three months are left on the construction schedule for the Nick Faldo-designed course, said Lane Neville, Cottonwood Hills president.

"Everything moves in big chunks from here," he said. "This is all the stuff at the end that you can finally see."

As soon as the "cool season" bluegrass sod is positioned in just the right spots, it will be drenched in water by hand and by sprinklers for about five days, said Brad Neville, who was busy with everything from hauling hoses to ensuring the sod had just enough water.

"We want the water to squish out of it," he said as he moved a sizable stretch of 1-inch hose across the ground. "In about five days, it will establish a root system."

As the sod project progresses, fairways will sport a hearty, green coat of zoysia grass, which will eventually require a third as much irrigation as other courses, Brad Neville said.

When finished, there will be close to 54 acres of zoysia sod, about 24 acres of the "cool season" sod, and an additional few acres of grass planted later.

"This is the most grass that's been laid in one day in Reno County in a long time, I bet," he said.

After the weather cools, crews will start planting grass on the tees and greens, using special blends of grass seed for both.

Each green will be certified by both the United States Golf Association and consultant Marriott Golf, meeting specific standards that the group hopes will attract future tournaments to the site.

To meet those standards, layers of sand, drainage pipe, pea gravel and grass will form greens that are 16 inches deep, Brad Neville said.

"We had to truck pea gravel in from Fort Smith, Arkansas," he said. "We couldn't get it around here."

Rain has slowed the project down, but not much, Brad Neville said. Each flag that marks a bunker or other feature has been assigned a geographic coordinate.

If it rains, and the flags are washed away, they can be replaced within a 1/10 inch of their original site.

"When the guys get here at 6 a.m., they can have almost all of them put back by the time I get here at 7," Brad Neville said. "They can get more done in that time than most people get done in a day."

A specialized drainage system now hides below the sand and grass of the course, but it's one of the key elements to the whole package.

"When you have a golf course, your grass is your asset," Lane Neville said. "You don't want sitting water, because that can cause root rot, which you can't do anything about."

With the golf course on its way to completion, the ability to sell properties for homes may not be far behind.

As the state and county finalize approvals for infrastructure and zoning, Lane Neville said he hopes to be able to start selling home sites in August.

The golf course received its first major national media attention in the latest edition of Golf Magazine: a spread on Nick Faldo mentions the course he designed several times.

"We're getting a lot of attention on the golf side, which is important," Lane Neville said. "We wanted to make sure we did this the right way, especially since we're in the shadow of Prairie Dunes."