

# SPORTS

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## City Park course gets blessing from FEMA

*Becker hopes work can start in November*

By **Trey Iles**  
Staff writer

It appears construction of the \$24.5 million championship golf course at City Park could begin before the end of the year.

City Park CEO Bob Becker said Tuesday that FEMA has green-lighted the project and the state is fairly confident it can be bid out at the end

**"It appears as though it's coming to a good conclusion. It's hard to say exactly on the timing. ... We're hoping (construction) will start before the end of the year."**

BOB BECKER, CITY PARK CEO

of August, with construction starting possibly in November.

If the project begins then, the course could open in early 2015, depending on when the grass can be planted for the growing season in 2014.

"It appears as though it's coming to a good conclusion," Becker said. "It's hard to say exactly on the timing. The bid process usually takes about two to three months. So (November) would

be the earliest. We're hoping (construction) will start before the end of the year."

The only possible hiccup is FEMA's review of the total value of the damage claims made by City Park for the East and West courses had not yet been completed. FEMA pegged the claim at \$6.1 million. Becker said he hopes the

See **GOLF COURSE, D-2**



A crumbled stone marker looks more like a tombstone at the East and West courses in City Park in 2009. Officials hope to have the new course open in early 2015.

MICHAEL DEMOCKER / STAFF ARCHIVE

After clearing a major FEMA hurdle Tuesday, the new \$24.5 million City Park golf course may be under construction soon.

MICHAEL DEMOCKER / STAFF ARCHIVE



## Course could be host of PGA events

**GOLF COURSE** from D-1

figure will be raised 10 to 30 percent.

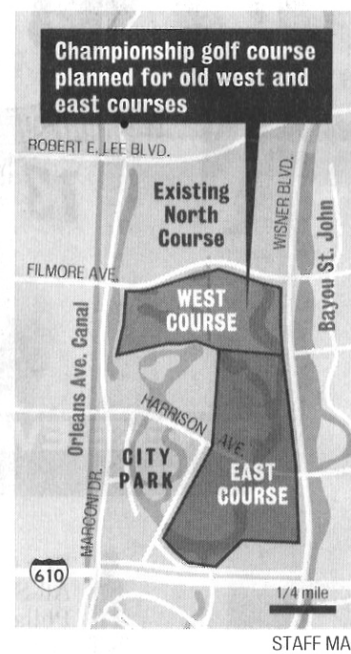
But the primary hurdle has been cleared. Course construction seemed to be ready to bid out last February. But FEMA decided an archeological analysis of the property was needed to see if there were any Native American artifacts there. Archeologists under contract to FEMA discovered American Indian pottery shards, animal bones and pieces of clay tobacco pipes near Bayou St. John in New Orleans last year.

Becker said that has concluded, clearing the way for the project to be let out to bid.

City Park officials hoped the project could have been started earlier. In November of last year, City Park announced that it had reached an agreement with the Bayou District Foundation to run the course. They had hoped the course would be opened in 2014. But that was before the FEMA delay.

Several pieces of the project are already in place though no dirt has been turned.

The design of the course, which was \$300,000 of the \$24.5 million and was paid for by the



STAFF MAP

Bayou District Foundation, has already been completed. Rees Jones Inc., and Torre Design Consortium worked along with the PGA Tour course design team to map out the course, which will be built on 250 acres of the old East and West courses.

The course could one day host the PGA Tour's annual stop in New Orleans, the Zurich Classic of New Orleans. TPC Louisiana

in Avondale is contracted to hold the Zurich through 2016. In April, Zurich re-upped as title sponsor of the New Orleans event through 2019.

In addition to managing the course, the Bayou District Foundation — a nonprofit group that joined in the redevelopment of the St. Bernard public-housing complex — also will chip in \$8.9 million in private money to build it.

City Park will pay \$15.5 million for the project and will use FEMA reimbursements and money from the state capital outlay program to fund its portion of the course.

City Park and the Bayou District Foundation agreed to a 35-year contract last November for course management. City Park will receive 75 percent of the first \$1.15 million in revenues each year with the Bayou District getting 25 percent. After that number is reached, City Park will get 55 percent of revenues and the Bayou District 45 percent per year.

The park projects to get as much as \$3 million in revenue from the new golf course, the North course and driving range, which opened in 2009, about five years after completion of the new facility.