Walton Gift Allows UCM to Enhance Golf Course as Community Destination

WARRENSBURG, MO (Dec. 18, 2014) – Efforts to enhance Pertle Springs as a high-quality recreational area that serves both the Warrensburg and campus community are receiving a financial boost thanks to a gift to the University of Central Missouri. The announcement of the gift from Audrey J. Walton, Versailles, through the UCM Foundation took place today in a press conference at the golf course.

“The University of Central Missouri values Audrey J. Walton’s continued friendship and support. Her generosity allows us to move forward with the final phase of a much-needed renovation project at Keth Memorial Golf Course that will breathe new life into our aging 1972 golf course greens, while also enhancing Pertle Springs as a destination spot and a source of pride for the entire community,” said UCM President Charles Ambrose.

With the course exceeding the 30- to 35-year standard life expectancy of greens, the university during the past year has worked to initiate the final phase of renovation for the golf course in cooperation with Burns & McDonnell Engineering and CE Golf Course Design. Walton’s gift will be applied toward the total cost of the project, which is estimated at $3.1 million. Additional work includes upgrading the hiking trail system at Pertle and addressing needs and improvements at Lake Cena.

Currently a full-service 18-hole facility, the golf course at Pertle Springs was originally constructed as a nine-hole course in 1972. In fall 2007 the university renovated the driving range facility and removed the existing clubhouse structure. A new driving range was added in 2008, and after a $1.5 million donation by Ms. Walton, the university opened a new 5,000-square-foot clubhouse in November 2011. Serving campus and community needs, the Audrey J. Walton Clubhouse includes a pro shop, Traditions restaurant with indoor and outdoor dining, staff offices, and locker room facilities for members of the Mules and Jennies golf teams and other golf course users.

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UCM’s Board of Governors in November 2014 accepted a bid of $2,964,600 from Frontier Construction Company in Pennsylvania to renovate the greens. In addition to the gift provided by Ms. Walton, the university will pay for the entire project through athletics reserve funds and a 15-year loan provided through the UCM Foundation.

“Mrs. Walton’s gift will allow us to turn Keth Memorial Golf Course into a quality golf course design with zoysia grass fairways, PGA spec-greens and concrete cart paths,” said Jerry Hughes, director of Intercollegiate Athletics. “It will make our facility a destination course and will only add to the experience with our current clubhouse and practice facility.”

The construction, or final phase of the project, is expected to get underway in spring 2015. Facilities such as the clubhouse will remain open, but the course will close shortly after the first of the new year, according to Hughes, and will re-open sometime in early fall 2015, depending on the weather. Once work is complete, the course is not expected to need major renovations for another 30 years or more.

The golf course at Pertle Springs is an auxiliary enterprise, and fees paid by campus and community members to play golf help cover ongoing maintenance.

Caption Information:

University of Central Missouri President Charles Ambrose, center, and Jerry Hughes, standing at right, director of Intercollegiate Athletics, announce a major gift from Audrey J. Walton, Versailles, Mo., while speaking to a group of local residents who gathered at the clubhouse at Keth Memorial Golf Course at Pertle Springs. The gift will be applied toward the final phase of improvements to the golf course and other areas that will help make Pertle a popular local destination.