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A gift from one old base to another

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LENNAR UPDATE

Bob Santos, president of Lennar's Heritage Fields division, said the company is beginning the dismantling of the old El Toro Marine Corps base.

He gave an update to the Great Park Corp. Board at last Thursday's meeting, saying deconstruction of the base has begun.

So far, Lennar has worked with Habitat for Humanity of Orange County to take windows, appliances and doors from the old base housing and buildings to be used by the nonprofit.

Lennar will continue to dismantle the housing all the way down to the slabs. Santos also said that within 30 days Lennar will be ready to begin demolition of the runways and will then work on testing how to demolish the concrete.

Santos mentioned lastly a gift from one base to another. Lennar is also involved with the Tustin Legacy development on the old Tustin helicopter base along Barranca Parkway. The property is being developed into a village of shops and houses punctuated by a 2-mile-long park featuring arches evocative of the two old blimp hangars.

Most of the base's trees were boxed to be replanted, and more trees were saved than will be needed. Therefore, Santos said he'll be bringing about 1 00 trees over to the El Toro base.

Some of the trees are 1 5-30 feet in height and worth about \$50,000 – making this gift worth a few million dollars.

SPORTS PARK

The Great Park Corp. board has learned that the sports park will cost \$84 million to build.

Griffin, a consultant firm, gave an update on Thursday about analyzing the potential costs and revenues of the sports park.

The presentation showed that the park would be about 1 65 acres – with an optional additional elite athletic training center. Even though the acreages and numbers of fields were based on surveys and research of what Orange County needs – some board directors said it was not enough.

"I think its woefully too few sports fields," said board member Bill Kogerman. "This can easily become the promise we made to the voters of Orange County."

Other directors echoed Kogerman's thoughts, but Walkie Ray also considered the cost of the park. He said that at \$84 million for construction and other monies needed for design, the sports park would cost around \$ 1 00 million – a quarter of the Great Park monies available.

The board will the discussion at its May 1 1 – but then tough decisions will need to be made. The Griffin consultants told the board that the sports park could bring in much more than the projected \$3.3 million per year in revenue. That would involve more private partnerships, such as selling naming rights, such as the "Nike Basketball Courts."

<http://epaper.ocregister.com/Repository/getFiles.asp?Style=OliveXLib...> 5/4/2006

"You can sell (Great Park) place to death," said one of the Griffin consultants. "You can put ads on the sides of the orange hot-air balloons, but would you want to?"

ARCHIVES

The Great Park will need not just City Council, but congressional approval for one of the possible park elements.

The National Archives is looking to move its regional offices and materials to the Great Park, a move that will require federal government approval.

The Archives now stores papers and other documents in the federal building in Laguna Niguel.

Stacked up, the holdings of the Western office would rise 6 ½ miles high, about the altitude most commercial jetliners fly.

Several executives of the National Archives briefed the board Thursday on what a Great Park presence would entail.

Great Park Corp. officers have been talking to the National Archives for several months and say it would be a great boost for the planned museum district to lure the Southern California office.

The National Archives is the keeper of the nation's historical papers, letters, maps, films and other official files.

If the National Archives and Great Park Corp. were to agree to bring the regional headquarters to Irvine, among the items that would be moved are the notes of Chuck Yeager's flight when he broke the sound barrier.

BASE TOUR

The 1 6-square-mile base will be opened to the public to visit once more before construction begins on the Great Park.

The tour is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, May 20. It will include guided tours of the base, exhibits on the base and on the Great Park and a friends and memories board.

People are asked to register early by calling (949) 724-7420 or by emailing finalsalute@ocgp.org before May 5. Include your name and the total number of guests in your party.

This column runs each week in the Irvine World News Thursday edition, updating readers on progress of the Great Park. Information is compiled by Great Park Corp. staff and Lennar's Heritage Fields staff.